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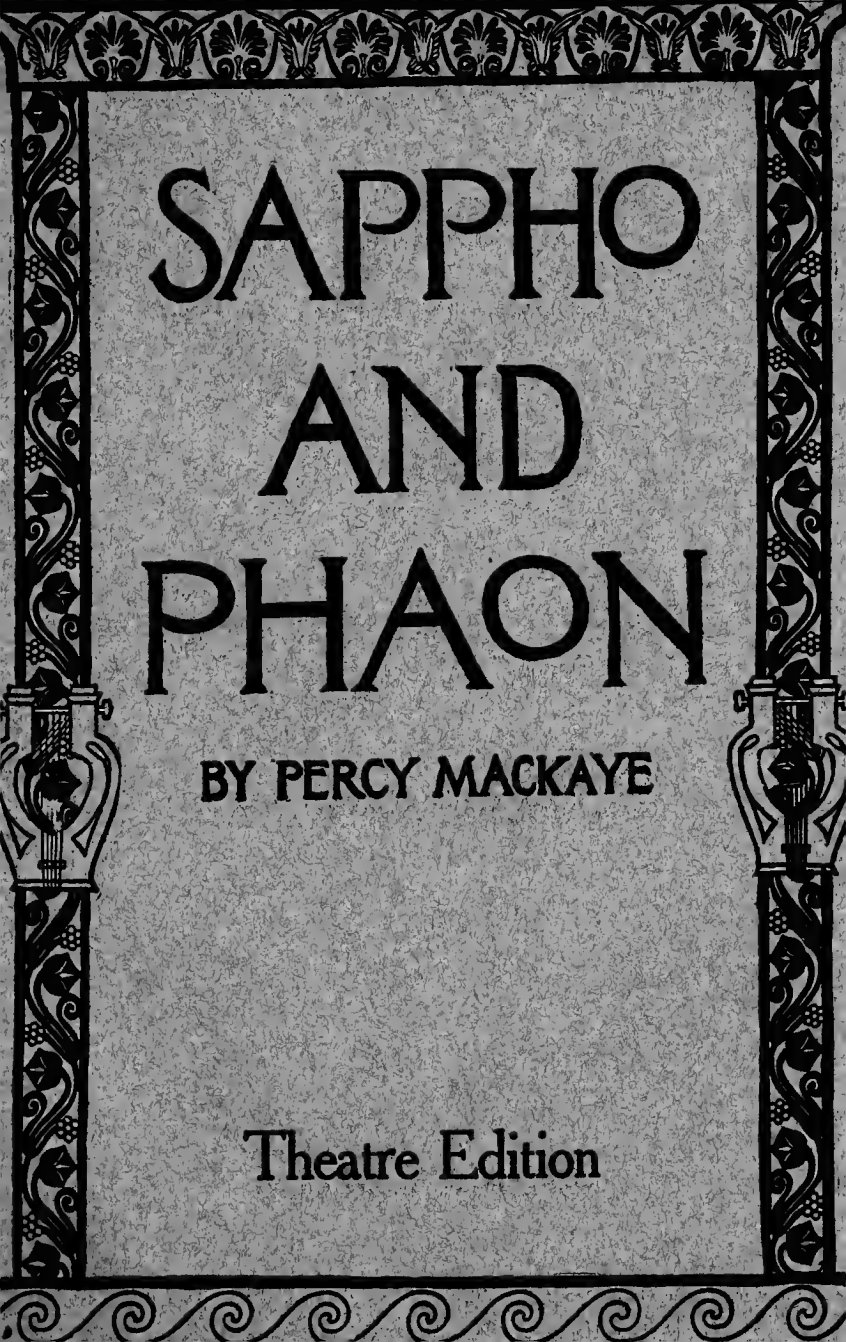
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# SAPPHO AND PHAON

BY PERCY MACKAYE

Theatre Edition





BY PERCY MACKAYE

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*The Canterbury Pilgrims. A Comedy.*

*Fenris, the Wolf. A Tragedy.*

*Jeanne D'Arc.*

*Sappho and Phaon.*

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Uniform, 12mo. \$1.25 net, each.



## SAPPHO AND PHAON







MADAME KALICH  
As Sappho. Act 1.

# SAPPHO AND PHAON

*A Tragedy*

BY

PERCY MACKAYE

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

1907

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Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

## TO MARION

σύν μοι πῖνε, συνήβα, συνέρα,  
συστεφανηφόρει,  
σύν μοι μαινομένῳ μαίνεο,  
σύν σώφροσι σωφρόνει.





## NOTE TO THEATRE EDITION

THIS volume constitutes the text of Mr. Harrison Grey Fiske's production of "Sappho and Phaon" for Madame Kalich and her company, and consists of that main portion of my published play entitled *The Tragedy*. The other portions — Prologue, Induction, Prelude, Interludes, and Epilogue — which form an archæological setting for *The Tragedy*, or play proper, it has been decided in the present production to omit; not because they are considered by manager or author as impractical for use in the theatre, or as disproportionate in relation to the whole, but because the results of their inclusion were not deemed sufficiently predictable to warrant their production at this time. And in this decision the author has heartily concurred.

The incidental music — choral and lyrical — has been composed by Professor A. A. Stanley, of the University of Michigan, and may be had in published form.

PERCY MACKAYE.

October, '1907.



# PROGRAMME

AS FIRST PERFORMED IN NEW YORK CITY AT THE  
LYRIC THEATRE, OCTOBER 21, 1907

## BERTHA KALICH

IN HARRISON GREY FISKE'S PRODUCTION OF

## SAPPHO AND PHAON

A TRAGEDY, IN THREE ACTS

BY PERCY MACKAYE

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

Phaon . . . . .	Henry Kolker
Alcæus . . . . .	Fred Eric
Pittacus . . . . .	Lucius Henderson
Bion . . . . .	Gladys Hulette
Priest of Poseidon . . . . .	R. M. Dolliver
Sappho . . . . .	Bertha Kalich
Anactoria . . . . .	Hazel MacKaye
Atthis . . . . .	Jessie F. Glendenning
Thalassa . . . . .	Adele Block

Girl Disciples, Sea Slaves, Acolytes, etc., by Misses Coburn, Krall, Lowell, Rich, Carlisle, Bayless, Richmond, Lake, Harris, McElroy, Ibbotson, Sinclair, Tremont; Messrs. Gordon, Morris, Williams, Oliver, Pullman, Kavanagh, Van Valer, Keough, Costello, Ryan, Ribblet, Fontaine, Crooks, Baldwin, Brady, Primrose, Young, Dult, Clark, Whitehead, Keeley, Carroll, and Alexander.

The Scene, laid on the Greek island of Lesbos near Asia Minor, represents a high promontory overlooking the Ægean Sea, near the ancient city of Mitylene. On the right of the spectator is the colonnade of a Doric temple; in the centre the altar of the Goddess Aphrodite; at the left, the altar of the sea-god Poseidon.

The time of the action is about 600 B.C.

ACT I — Late afternoon.

ACT II — Evening of same day.

ACT III — Dawn of the following morning.

The music incidental to the tragedy composed by A. A. Stanley, A.M.

The scenery painted by Gates and Morange and constructed by the George W Ormston Company.

The costumes designed by Percy Anderson and made by E. S. Freisinger.

The properties by Edward Siedle.

The electric effects by Kliegl Brothers and John Higham.

### EXECUTIVE STAFF FOR MR. FISKE

J. Duke Murray . . . . .	Business Manager
Theodore T. Frankenberg . . . . .	Advance Representative
Robert Milton . . . . .	Stage Manager
R. M. Dalliver . . . . .	Assistant Stage Manager
George H. Wiseman . . . . .	Musical Director
Robert B. Ross . . . . .	Carpenter
John Higham . . . . .	Electrician
Edward Kern . . . . .	Property Man
Mrs. Mattie Hoover . . . . .	Wardrobe Mistress



## THE TRAGEDY

καὶ ποθήω καὶ μάομαι . . .

ἀλλὰ πᾶν τόλματον. . . .

— *Sapphonis Fragmenta.*

Βῆ δ' ἀκέων παρὰ θῖνα

πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης.

— *Iliad, I.*



## ACT I

SCENE: A high promontory, overlooking the Ægean sea, sprinkled with isles.

*On the left, pillars of a Doric temple form a colonnade which, stretching away left, disappears behind tall cypresses. Behind these columns, tapestries of dark azure hide the whole wall of the temple, concealing the doorway. Against the background, the contours of the pillars themselves rise vast and chaste into the obscurity of foliage — their capitals lost among ancient boughs.*

*Near the centre of the scene, at back, against the side wall of the temple, built on a raised and jutting rock and approached by steps from the colonnade, stands an altar of yellow marble, in which is sculptured a flying dove.*

*Below this altar of Aphrodite, the foreground on the right juts upward to it in contours of the bare, weathered rock of the promontory; in this, a worn crevice, near the centre of the scene, indicates the beginning of a sheer cliff-path, which descends the precipice to the unseen beach, the far sound of whose breakers, in ceaseless cadence, rising murmurous from below, catches the ear in pauses of the action. Near the cliff-path, a fire-urn, upheld by sculptured Nereids. On the right, the seascape is defined by a grove of olive trees, which grow near to the foreground.*

*On the edge of this grove, chiselled in colossal proportions out of yellow marble, rises a statue of Aphrodite, conceived with the naïve, pre-classic simplicity of an age still half Homeric.*

*Similarly, on the left, a statue of Poseidon. These images do not obtrude themselves, but partly withdrawn in foliage, their large presences overshadow in silence the action of the Tragedy.*

*As this scene is disclosed to view, voices of women are heard singing in unison within the temple.*

#### THE VOICES

Builders, build the roof-beam high :

*Hymenæon !*

More than mortal comes the man ;

*Hymenæon !*

But the maiden like a maid,

Rose-pale, rose-red,

*Kala, O Chariessa !*

*[From the temple appears ANACTORIA. She looks away, right, then turning to depart, left, encounters ATTHIS entering.]*

#### ANACTORIA

So late ?

#### ATTHIS

O Anactoria !

#### ANACTORIA

Our lady

Sappho hath bade me look for thee. — Not weeping !



ATTHIS

He hath not come! My eyes are water-blind  
With staring on the sea, in hopes to espy  
His scarlet sail slope from the mainland. Still  
No sign — no little gleam — of Larichus.

ANACTORIA

Thou happy Atthis!

ATTHIS

Happy? But to-morrow —

ANACTORIA

To-morrow you shall wed with Sappho's brother,  
And win for sister the bright Lesbian Muse,  
Who hath herself composed your bridal-hymn,  
And he that is Poseidon's cup-bearer  
Shall be your husband.

ATTHIS

Shall I not, then, weep  
Because he does not come? Three days ago  
He sailed for Lydia, to fetch me home  
Pearls for our bridal. Oh, I want not pearls,  
Nor any gift but Larichus, his love.

ANACTORIA

Why, he will come. To-night the moon is full,  
The Ægean calm. — What's this?

ATTHIS

I had forgot.

As I climbed up from Mitylene here,  
 I met Alcæus, and he gave me this  
 To bring —

ANACTORIA

Alcæus? Give it me!

[*She snatches a vase from Atthis.*]

Dear gods,

Let not this trembling quake the promontory  
 And topple temple and all into the waves.  
 Daylight and dark! — *Alcæus* sends me this.

ATTHIS

[*Gazes away, sighing.*]

O little clouds, why are ye shaped like sails?

ANACTORIA

Fresh from his hands — himself the potter! Here's  
 A painted vine, and under the ripe grapes  
 A dove hath wove her nest among the verses.  
 Verses and vase — poem and painter — mine!

[*She kisses the verse and reads.*]

'The sea-god breathes his heart in the sea-shell,  
 And leaves it on the sands, to syllable

One sound forever.

O maid of Lesbos, murmuring one name  
 Within this vase, thy lover's lips have vowed  
 Passion eternal.'

[*With sudden abandon, she springs to Atthis and embraces her.*]

My Atthis, thou hast brought to me in this  
More precious medicine than ever healed  
Fever and ague.

ATTHIS

I ?

ANACTORIA

You do not guess ;  
Of late I have been damned with jealousy  
That almost made me hate him.

ATTHIS

[*Appalled.*]

Larichus ?

ANACTORIA

No, no, you doting bride : Alcæus. Quick,  
What said he when he bade you bring me this ?

ATTHIS

But that is not for you. — Ah ! twist me not !  
Thou hurtest my arm.

ANACTORIA

Speak, then !

ATTHIS

What should I say ?

ANACTORIA

Whom is this for ?

ATTHIS  
For Sappho.

ANACTORIA  
[*Loosing Atthis, with a cry.*]  
She it was!  
[*Sinks crouching upon the steps.*]

ALCÆUS  
[*Calls outside.*]  
Atthis!

ATTHIS  
[*To Anactoria.*]  
My friend! I did not guess. — Forgive!  
[*Enter, left, ALCÆUS. He addresses Atthis, who stands before Anactoria.*]

ALCÆUS  
Hath Sappho seen it? Hast thou shown it her?  
What did she say?

ANACTORIA  
[*Holding the vase, rises.*]  
Your lady's in the temple,  
Training the chorus of her girl-disciples.  
This votive urn of incense from your lips  
Hath not yet breathèd in her delicate ear  
"Passion eternal!"

ALCÆUS

By Hephæstus, how  
Came you with this ?

ANACTORIA

Oh, by Alcæus, how  
Came this to you : this mad, this hollow love ?  
Look ! “ Maid of Lesbos, murmuring one name  
Within this vase, thy lover’s lips ” — And are  
Sappho and Anactoria one name ?  
How ardent hast thou murmured that one name  
Up at my casement : “ Anactoria ! ”  
Now hers to her ! No other eyes but Sappho’s  
Had done it ! — Atthis, that it should be she  
Whom best I love, our mistress and our muse,  
Hath drawn him from me ! So she draws the world,  
Day, evening, and the dawn, to wait on her —  
Maiden and man, like an immortal.

ALCÆUS

So

Love draws us all.

ANACTORIA

Not all ! To some of us  
Love beacons like a star.

ALCÆUS

[Smiling.]

A shooting-star !  
That nightly fills anew his fiery quiver !

## ANACTORIA

And this is thou — Alcæus! O this air  
Goes black and red between us. Fare you well;  
But when your Sappho comes here from the singing,  
Take her your gift —

*[From the height of the steps, she flings the vase at his feet,  
dashing it in pieces.]*

and when you lift it up,  
Tell her it is the heart of her girl-friend.

*[Exit, right.]*

## ALCÆUS

*[To Atthis.]*

Nothing of this to Sappho!

## ATTHIS

Dost thou deem  
Others as false as thou art? She shall know.

## ALCÆUS

But Atthis — *[Springing up the steps.]*

*[Exit Atthis within the temple.]*

If she tells her!

*[Watching persons approach, he starts violently.]*

Pittacus!

*[Enter, left, PITTACUS, followed by a soldier, to whom he  
speaks.]*

PITTACUS

Say to the citizens, I will not hold  
Council to-day. The sea-wind blows too sweet  
Of lentisk and of samphire for my thoughts  
To brood on war; the eyes of Sappho are  
A mightier tyranny than Mitylene. —  
Wait; it were wiser to omit that last.

[*Exit the soldier.*]

ALCÆUS

O seven wise men of the world in one!  
Most civic lover — *to omit that last!*

PITTACUS

Greeting, Alcæus!

ALCÆUS

Pittacus is gone

To smell the south wind. Therefore, citizens,  
Adjourn the council! It were wiser not  
Allude to tyranny and Sappho's eyes,  
For Pittacus, elected by the people,  
Must keep one eye or two for votes. Enough,  
He hath a nose enamoured of the south wind!  
What was that odorous phrase? — Lentisk and sam-  
phire!

PITTACUS

Alcæus still is young.

ALCÆUS

And Pittacus a lover!  
What says Archilochus:  
“*Lovers that stink of leeks*  
*Put samphire in their songs.*”

PITTACUS

In temper temperance,  
My friend.

ALCÆUS

In lack of sense  
Sententiousness, O sage!  
How is philosophy  
Selling per pound? I mean  
Without the fat, of course.

PITTACUS

Is not this feud too old  
For us to blow up fire  
In the ashes?

ALCÆUS

'Tis as old  
As when you, gutter-tyrant,  
Imprisoned me — a noble  
And knight of Lesbos.

PITTACUS

For  
Sedition. Yet it seems  
You now go free.

ALCÆUS

Bright gods,  
Witness this gentle tyrant!  
Look where the shouting people  
Crown him with garlic leaves;



For he hath freed from prison  
Alcæus the seditious !  
Hail him Magnanimous,  
And grant him in the Assembly —  
A thousand extra votes !

PITTACUS

Sir, you go far.

ALCÆUS

Nay, grant him  
For that great-minded deed,  
Fair Sappho's admiration !

PITTACUS

Insolence !

ALCÆUS

Hypocrite !

PITTACUS

[*Raising his staff.*]

Go !

ALCÆUS

Sniggling demagogue !

[*Enter, right, PHAON — his shoulders stooped beneath a burden of drift-wood. Moving toward the temple, his path lies between Alcæus and Pittacus.*]

PITTACUS

Thou, swollen-up with words  
And bitter wind, presumptuous  
Fop —

ALCÆUS

Mule of Mitylene,  
Bray! Let the temple fillies  
Hark to thy hee-haw.

PITTACUS

Zeus,

Chastise this man!

*[Striking at Alcæus, who springs back, the staff of Pittacus falls and breaks upon Phaon, who receives the blow with mute passivity and passes on to the temple. Pittacus slowly lets fall the pieces of his staff.]*

Eternal Zeus, thy hand  
Hath interposed this slave. Look where he goes,  
Alcæus; dumb, submissive, yet my blow  
Fell undeserved.

ALCÆUS

A pack-beast!

PITTACUS

True; and yet

His silence hath a peace majestic,  
His unresistingness, an awe! 'Tis we  
That, by comparison, are petty: we  
That for a snarling ideality  
Yelp at each other like Actæon's dogs  
To tear our master — our own self-command.  
Ah, passionless indifference! That we  
Might rather live like yonder sea-drudge, callous  
To quickening beauty, and incapable  
Of joy or anguish of imagination,  
Than thus in bondage of enamour'd pain

For that immortal being, Sappho, rage  
 Vituperate and scorn each other, clutch'd  
 Mind against mind, man against man, to possess her.

ALCÆUS

[*Cynically.*]

Still you remain to rage.

PITTACUS

No; fare you well,

Alcæus: go you in to Sappho first  
 And I will come hereafter. Better were it —  
 Far better than this venom'd wrangling — there  
 From Aphrodite's rock into the sea  
 For us to adventure the Leucadian leap:  
 That leap which brings to passionate lovers — death,  
 Or from the goddess, ultimate repose.

[*He passes from the scene, right. Alcæus stands for a moment, moved by his words. Within the temple voices once more lift up the Sapphic hymn. Then from the temple emerge, singing, the GIRL-DISCIPLES of Sappho, and pass, left, away toward Mitylene. SAPPHO herself, followed at a little distance by Atthis, comes slowly down the steps, twining a fillet of violets, lost in the music. Seeing her, Alcæus approaches, passionate, but pauses — abashed by her presence.*]

THE GIRL-DISCIPLES

Gath'ers, what have ye forgot

*Hymenæon!*

Blushing ripe on the end of the bough?

*Hymenæon!*

Ripe now, but ye may not reach,  
For the bride is won, and the groom is strong.

*Kala, O Chariessa !*

[*Exeunt.*]

ALCÆUS

Lady of violets and reverie,  
Sappho — I long to speak, but shame restrains me.

SAPPHO

Alcæus, had your thoughts been beautiful,  
Nor any double-speech upon your tongue,  
Shame would not turn away your eyes from mine ;  
You would have spoken simply to me now.

ALCÆUS

It is not simple to say beautifully  
What I would say. — Hast thou, in Mitylene,  
Watched the young market-maidens weaving fillets  
Of wild flowers ? Know you what men say 'tis sign of ?

SAPPHO

Is it a sign ?

ALCÆUS

That all such are in love.  
Truly they are but country maids, and yet  
Persephone herself was such a girl  
Weaving *her* wild-flowers when dark Pluto plucked her.  
Lady, you too are weaving : may I ask  
For whom ?

SAPPHO

[*Holding out the fillet.*]

And if I answered — for Alcæus?

ALCÆUS

[*Ardent.*]

Sappho!

SAPPHO

[*Withholding the fillet.*]

And if I gave this — to another!

[*Stooping, she lifts a fragment of the broken vase and reads.*]“*Within this vase thy lover’s lips have vowed*” —

The vow itself is cracked: how came it broken?

ALCÆUS

[*Bitterly.*]

At this hath told thee!

SAPPHO

Anactoria

Is dear to me.

ALCÆUS

But she should understand:

I loved her, and I love her now no more.

Well, if for this she weeps, let her revile

The god, not me. — Can I constrain a god?

Tether him? Clip his wings? Say ‘come’ or ‘go’?

Love is a voyager, and like the wind

That shakes awhile the summer woods with music

Moves on, to stir the hearts of unknown bowers.

## SAPPHO

O love in man ! How then in woman ? What  
 If Anactoria had scorned Alcæus ?  
 Is there a god and eke a goddess Love :  
 The one all vagrant, lawless, unrestrained,  
 Self-seeking ardour ? The other — all compassion'd  
 Submissive constancy ? How would it fare  
 With us, Alcæus, had you won my love  
 And I should prove untrue ?

*[From the right, Anactoria enters and rejoins Atthis at the steps of the shrine. There, while Atthis seeks gently to distract her, she keeps her eyes fixed in passionate brooding upon Sappho and Alcæus. The latter is about to reply to Sappho, when she stays him with a smile and gesture.]*

It matters not.

Love is indeed goddess and god, and man  
 And woman, and the world ! What shall it boot  
 To argue with the shy anemone,  
 Or reason with the rose ? — This air is spring,  
 And on this isle of flowers we all are lovers.

## ALCÆUS

Ah, then you love me, Sappho !

## SAPPHO

By what token ?

## ALCÆUS

Even by this speech of thine.

SAPPHO

Eyes are the tongues  
Of lovers, and their speech is light, not sound,  
Therefore you know not Love's infallible  
Tokens.

ALCÆUS

But tell me !

SAPPHO

Grant it then — I love you :  
Then, were it so, what need had you to ask ?  
For should I see you but a little instant,  
Then is my voice choked and my tongue is broken ;  
Under my flesh quick fire runs flame and quivers ;  
My eyes look blank on darkness ; sounds of roaring  
Sing in mine ears ; chiller than death the frore dews  
Danken my limbs, and pale as grass in autumn,  
I tremble.

[Smiling.]

Are the tokens manifest ?

[From the temple reënters Phaon without his burden. As Sappho turns her face archly from Alcæus, her eyes fall upon the slave, who, oblivious, with dreamy gaze fixed upon the sea, approaches and passes her by, silent as a sleep-walker. Following his figure unconsciously with her look, Sappho — with rapid gradation changing in mood and aspect — begins to show visibly the tokens she has been describing, till overwhelming faintness closes her eyes.]

ALCÆUS

Why do you mock me, lady? Pain of hope,  
Pain of desire are punishment enough,  
Without your irony. — Gods, thou art pale!  
What is it, Sappho? Ha! thou hast *not* mocked me!  
You tremble: Nay, poor fool, me — happy fool!  
Now, now I understand.

SAPPHO

[*Faintly.*]

Not now.

ALCÆUS

[*With lowered voice.*]

I know;

Eyes only speak, and yours are eloquent;  
They follow yonder slave to where she stands  
Watching us there. — Her jealousy is mad;  
Let it not move thee; it can touch us not;  
And what are we to Anactoria  
That — lean on me!

[*He reaches to support Sappho, whose eyes have closed.*  
*Exit Phaon, right.*]

SAPPHO

Later — to-night.

ALCÆUS

But Sappho —



SAPPHO

Under the stars to-night ; here, by the temple —

[*Slowly, looking away right.*]

When there are no slaves passing.

ALCÆUS

[*Kissing her robe.*]

Till to-night !

[*He departs by the colonnade, exultant. Sappho stands silent, shaken by deep breaths of a great emotion. Anactoria, whose eyes have never left Sappho's face, seeing her now alone, leaves Atthis who seeks fearfully to detain her by catching at a lyre which Anactoria carries rigidly in her arm.*]

ATTHIS

Wait ; let me play to thee !

[*Unheeding, Anactoria approaches Sappho and comes very close, before Sappho, opening her arms with a glad start, embraces her.*]

SAPPHO

My 'Toria.

[*Allowing Sappho to draw her face close to hers, Anactoria speaks then in a tense, low voice. Before she has finished speaking, she springs loose, with a spurning gesture.*]

ANACTORIA

Oh, that I were a beast on the wild hills,  
And I had borne thee to my twilight lair  
Alive, and there had bitten thee to death,  
And dabbled all thy beauty in the dew —  
And *he* to look upon it !

SAPPHO

'Toria !

ANACTORIA

[ *Wildly.* ]

Oh, call me not that name ; it is too dear.  
So did you call me first that silver night  
Below your orchard, when you taught me first  
To strike this plectron on this lyre. — You kissed me  
And cried : “ Well played, my 'Toria ! ”

SAPPHO

And so  
I'll kiss thee, dear, a thousand silver nights.

ANACTORIA

[ *Holding the plectron like a daggeret.* ]

Come not so close ; I'll scratch thy cheek with this,  
And stencil in thy blood Alcæus' name,  
That all may read how Sappho loved her friend.

SAPPHO

[ *To Atthis.* ]

And so for this she would she were a beast  
To dabble all my beauty in the dew !

[ *Turning to Anactoria with gentle laughter.* ]

O girl !

ANACTORIA

I heard you bid him come to-night.

SAPPHO

I said to-night ?

ANACTORIA

Wilt thou deny it ?

SAPPHO

Let

Alcæus come to-night, then. I will be  
Punctual to his coming, and if thou  
Hast deemed me ever a wise art-mistress, trust me  
To teach him such a lesson then in love  
As he shall long remember — for *thy* sake.  
Come, wilt thou love thine old friend — one night more ?

ANACTORIA

*[Going to her and embracing her knees.]*

O dear and mighty ! Thou art not as we.

SAPPHO

A goddess once again ? No cheeks, eyes, elbows  
To be restored ? Why, truly, then, these poets  
Are wise who sing : " Hail, Sappho, thou tenth Muse !"  
Therefore rise up, sweet mortal, and attend  
How I shall prove my Musehood by a song.

*[Taking the lyre from Anactoria.]*

Hand me the plectron. — Atthis, sit with us  
Here. 'Tis a Linus-song for vintagers  
To chant in autumn. Therefore, 'Toria,  
If thou wilt weep, weep not for Cupid, but  
Adonis. — Kiss me ! Now this will I sing  
Deftly to please my girl-friends.

[*Sappho is seated on the marble bench, right; Atthis on the ground before her. Anactoria, standing beside the bench, turns away while Sappho sings and, overcome with restrained weeping, steals off through the colonnade. Meantime, from the right, Pittacus has appeared and stands listening, unseen.*]

What shall we do, Cytherea?

Tender Adonis is dying!

What shall we do?

Rend, rend your delicate tunics,

Rend, rend your breasts, O my maidens:

Weep — *Ai le nu!*

[*Looking after Anactoria.*]

Poor jealousy! — Run, fetch her back to us,  
And take her this.

ATTHIS

[*Taking the lyre from Sappho.*]

I fear she will not come.

[*Exit.*]

PITTACUS

[*Approaches Sappho with hesitating deference.*]

Clear voice of Lesbos —

SAPPHO

[*Turning.*]

Lord of Mitylene!

## PITTACUS

Lady, in Athens, the last time I met  
Solon, the tyrant, he was in his garden,  
And where he sat the almond-blossoms fell  
On his white hair. He had thrown his parchments  
down

And looked on me with eyes that saw me not,  
For near him stood a slender, thrush-voiced boy  
Gushing a song. And when the boy had ceased,  
"Whose song was that?" he asked. The boy said,  
"Sappho's:"

And Solon, speaking low, said: "Sing that only!  
So that I may not die before I learn it."

## SAPPHO

Solon was wise; my songs are beautiful.

## PITTACUS

For they are you. Sappho, I also am  
Tyrant and lawgiver. My function 'tis  
In war and peace to engineer this isle,  
And through the level conduits of the mind  
To irrigate the state with the still waters  
Of reason; I have schooled and flogged my will  
With the iron whips of Sparta; and my words  
Are sown abroad for wisdom; yet—O hear me!  
Thy voice hath loosed in me a thousand streams  
That overleap their banks, and inundate  
My ordered world with passion; vain it is  
I strive to dam those springs; their foaming tides

Burst into glorious laughter, and I drown  
Rapturous ; vain it is I charge my soul —  
This love is madness, peril and despair !  
I *know* that it is madness — yet I love you.

## SAPPHO

*Are* you, then, mad? Does not supreme desire  
Beget the supreme joy? This engineered,  
Wise-ordered state of yours — when you have cast  
Its lovers forth on some bleak lepers' rock  
In the barren sea ; when you have builded all  
Its solemn temples of serenity,  
And sculptured on its gates your city's god —  
The massy image of Indifference ;  
When you have set up in the public ways  
Fountains of running reason, where cold virgins  
And silent boys, with philosophic beards,  
Fill their chaste pitchers, and turn dumbly home  
To tipple with their grandsires — tell me, then !  
Will you not fear, some day, an insurrection,  
When those same boys and girls, with flying hair  
And eyes aflame, shall drag you in the market  
And cry : “ Our lovers ! Give us back our lovers !  
Give us our mad joys and our loves again ! ”

## PITTACUS

Sappho, the wild bees of Persuasion hive  
Between your lips. Call me what name you will :  
Sage — madman ; only take from me my gift  
In love.

SAPPHO

What do you offer ?

PITTACUS

Mitylene.

SAPPHO

As mine ?

PITTACUS

To rule with me.

SAPPHO

Is not such rather

A man's, not woman's office ?

PITTACUS

Yours alone

Of women ! See, a little while ago  
I brought this staff to you : you were in the temple,  
And here I met Alcæus ; here for you  
We wrangled, and in wrath I lifted this  
And left it — so.

SAPPHO

Heigh me ! A vase, a sceptre :

And now both dashed in pieces at my feet !  
Surely this Sappho is a stony image  
And not a maid, to shatter such love-tokens.  
You struck Alcæus ?

PITTACUS

No, by chance the blow

Fell on a passing slave.

SAPPHO

[*Slowly.*]

You said — a slave ?

PITTACUS

A sea-drudge

With drift-wood for Poseidon's  
Night-fire.

SAPPHO

[*Breathing quick.*]

Give me the pieces.

His flesh, you say ?

PITTACUS

His flesh ?

It did not strike Alcæus !

SAPPHO

[*Feeling the staff's splintered edge.*]No, but his bare flesh ! On  
His shoulder ?

PITTACUS

It struck only

The slave.

SAPPHO

[*Quivering.*]

The bright blood started !



PITTACUS

There sprang no blood, dear lady ; the staff broke  
Against the fagots on the fellow's shoulder. —  
All for mere words ! Alcæus had but gibed me  
With foolish words. Judge now if I have need  
Of you, to sway the staff of Mitylene.

SAPPHO

*[After a brief pause.]*

True, Pittacus ; why should we not splice these  
In one, and wield this staff together ? Grant  
I'm but a slave, being but woman ; yet  
If you, that are the maker of your law,  
If you detect in me this civic gift  
Surpassing woman, shall you not then leap  
This breach of sex, and make me your true mate —  
Greatly your wife and lover ?

PITTACUS

Speak with pity !

Let me not doubt I hear this.

SAPPHO

Hear it well,

For I would reason, too : A slave, I said,  
But — turn the tables ! *You* are now the slave  
(No maid as I, but such a bondman, say,  
As that same drift-wood bearer whom you struck),  
And I am maiden-tyrant of Mitylene,  
Over all Lesbos lawgiver of love.

PITTACUS

Even as thou art !

SAPPHO

Why then, you poor base slave,  
 If I detect in your sea-sinew'd limbs  
 Olympian graces moving, if I see  
 Far in your cold deep eyes dæmonic fire  
 Outburning the eye-glance of a faun in love,  
 If I behold in you, outcast, my kin  
 Congenial spirit, may I not reach to you  
 My tyrant's staff, and raise you at my side —  
 No more a thing for men to scorn, but now  
 Greatly my lord and lover ?

PITTACUS

What would . . . ?

SAPPHO

Wait !

Or must I now because I am a woman,  
 Forego the tyrant's great prerogative —  
 To make mine own law ?

PITTACUS

Sappho, but to what  
 Leads this? I do not follow you.

SAPPHO

It leads  
 To the Golden Age. If you would get my love,  
 Follow me there.

[*Turning away, Sappho springs to the steps of Aphrodite's  
 shrine.*]

PITTACUS

Have you, then, only mocked me ?  
Am I to come no more ?

SAPPHO

[*Pausing.*]

Nay, Pittacus,  
I have but mocked myself. Come when you will.

PITTACUS

To-night ? Under these olives ?

SAPPHO

When you will ;  
And so, good-by ! Oh, you have given me thoughts  
To make the woman tremble in me.

PITTACUS

Sappho !

[*With a gesture of love toward her, as she turns again to the steps, he departs, left. Sappho, having mounted to the shrine, prostrates herself before it; then — facing the Ægean, seated, her arms about her knees, plastic, silent — gazes down upon the waves. From the colonnade Atthis enters and searches about with her eyes.*]

ATTHIS

Where art thou, Sappho ?

[*Discovering her, Atthis ascends the steps.*]

Anactoria

Is wilful, and she swears she will not come  
Again, till she has sought Alcæus out

And dragged him to thy scorn. — Thou hast not  
heard me.

Sweet mistress, here is Atthis. What hath happened  
That like an image thou sittst staring ?

SAPPHO

[*In a low voice.*]

Hark !

She is calling me.

ATTHIS

Who calls ?

SAPPHO

My mother.

ATTHIS

[*Starting.*]

Sappho !

SAPPHO

Dost thou not hear her sob and sing below us ?  
Her hollow lute is turquoise, and she touches  
The silver strings of ever-roaring reefs  
Far off to sound her awful lullaby ;  
And while she croons, between her foaming breasts —  
Like infants at their milk — Hyperion lies  
And heaving Triton dreams. Us too, us mortals,  
She suckles there, and there she buries us.

ATTHIS

What new hymn art thou musing ?

SAPPHO

Listen again !

Oh, such a sobbing cry did Thetis make  
That night she rose beside the blood-starr'd beach

Of Troy, to her great son Achilles, ere  
He died. Me, too, she calls : I sink, I sink !  
Atthis, I have heard the whirling cliff-birds scream,  
And watched my breaths burst up through the green  
    wave  
In moons of opal fire.

ATTHIS

I am afraid ;  
Is it some goddess calls thee ?

SAPPHO

'Tis the sea,  
The teeming, terrible, maternal sea  
That spawned us all. She calls me back to her,  
But I will not go. Her womb hath brought me forth  
A child defiant. I will be free of her !  
Her ways are birth, fecundity, and death,  
But mine are beauty and immortal love.  
Therefore I will be tyrant of myself —  
Mine own law will I be ! And I will make  
Creatures of mind and melody, whose forms  
Are wrought of loveliness without decay,  
And wild desire without satiety,  
And joy and aspiration without death ;  
And on the wings of those shall I, I, Sappho !  
Still soar and sing above these cliffs of Lesbos,  
Even when ten thousand blooms of men and maids  
Are fallen and withered — there.

[*Peering below, she touches Atthis' arm and points.*]

What man is that ?

ATTHIS

Where ?

SAPPHO

There, beneath us, where the cliff-path leaves  
The beach. See, he is climbing toward our faces.

ATTHIS

I am dizzy.

SAPPHO

He is clinging to the rock  
Of garnet, where the sea-doves build their nests.  
He is reaching over it. — Atthis, he will fall !

ATTHIS

I see him now — a fisherman : his net  
Is over his shoulder.

SAPPHO

He hath seized it, look —  
A young dove ! And he brings it in the net.

ATTHIS

A slave.

SAPPHO

Know you his name ?

ATTHIS

His name is Phaon.

SAPPHO

[*Slowly.*]

Phaon! And so 'tis Phaon! and forever  
'Sappho and Phaon.'

ATTHIS

Dost thou muse again?

SAPPHO

When lovers' names are born, their syllables  
Fall like the snowflakes of Apollo's tears,  
That crystallize in song.

[*Murmuring.*]

— Sappho and Phaon!

ATTHIS

'Tis not a slave like others. You have heard  
What the old sea-wives whisper.

SAPPHO

No.

ATTHIS

Of him

And Aphrodite?

SAPPHO

[*Eagerly.*]

Nay, what do they whisper?

## ATTHIS

They say that once, when Phaon was a boy,  
 One twilight, when the Ægean was upturn  
 By mighty wind and thunder, and the fish-folk  
 Prayed in their harbours — at the tempest's height,  
 Appeared upon the beach an old, poor woman  
 And begged a passage to the mainland. None  
 Heard her but scoffed or cursed her; only Phaon  
 Unloosed his boat, and rowed her through the storm  
 To Lydia. At dawn, when he returned,  
 His look was altered and he spoke strange things;  
 How, when his boat reached mainland, the poor hag  
 Had cast her cloak and sprung, with burning limbs,  
 Upon the sands — a goddess! Since which night  
 (They say) he hath grown up indifferent  
 To all his kith and kind; to laughter, love,  
 And slave-girls singing. — 'Tis a pretty tale;  
 Wouldst thou not love to make a song of it?

## SAPPHO

In truth, my Atthis, 'tis a moving tale,  
 And I should love to make a song of it.  
 Leave me!

## ATTHIS

Wilt thou compose it on the spot?  
 Nay, then I'll go for news of Larichus.

*[Atthis departs toward Mitylene. Sappho, left alone, descends from the shrine and leans against one of the temple pillars. From the cliff-path, Phaon enters. About him is flung a sea-net, under the hanging folds of which he holds in his hands, enmeshed, a white dove.]*



*Seeing him, Sappho withdraws into the temple through the tapestries, from between which she soon looks forth again. Slowly Phaon descends the broad steps and, sitting upon the last, extricates the dove from the net. As he rises with it in his hand and goes toward the altar of Poseidon, Sappho — unseen of him — comes from the temple and descends the steps behind him. Having reached the altar, Phaon is about to lift a knife which lies upon it, when Sappho stays his arm. Seeing her, he bends low in a subjected manner.]*

SAPPHO

The dove: what wouldst thou with the wild thing?

PHAON

[*Serenely.*]

Kill it.

SAPPHO

It struggles. See, is not it beautiful?

PHAON

I know not; you have spoken.

SAPPHO

But for whom

Wilt thou then kill it, bondman?

PHAON

For Poseidon;

The god is angry.

SAPPHO

Oh, not for Poseidon!

His sacrifice is death; to Aphrodite

Give it! For her the sacrifice is life.

Give it to me and I will dedicate it

Alive to Aphrodite, for it is

Her sacred bird. Look, I will give thee this —

My bracelet — for the dove.

PHAON

*[Taking, as at a command, Sappho's bracelet, releases the dove into her hands.]*

'Tis yours.

SAPPHO

Her shrine

Is yonder. I will loose it to her there.

*[Starting for the shrine, Sappho treads upon the net, which Phaon before has let fall beside the steps. Pausing, she looks back at him, where he stands intent upon the gleaming bracelet in his hand. For a moment she continues to look at Phaon thus, then, wrapping the dove in her filmy scarf, and placing it with her flowers on the steps, she lifts the net where it lies.]*

Thy net is torn.

PHAON

I climbed here from the beach.

It caught on the cliff-rocks.

SAPPHO

I will mend it.

PHAON

*[For the first time gazing at her.]*

You!

*[Fastening one end of the net—somewhat more than shoulder-high—to the tripod on the altar, Sappho secures the other end to the bronze caryatid, right. Thus (the net cutting the foreground obliquely from the middle) her face is separated from Phaon's by the interlaced strands, some of which—hanging torn—leave gaps in the fibre.]*

SAPPHO

To mend is woman's task.

PHAON

*[In wonder.]*

Are you a woman?

SAPPHO

Perhaps I am what women yearn to be :  
Man.

PHAON

Did you grow here in the temple?

SAPPHO

Where

I grew, or in what garden by the spray  
Or wave-lit cave my spirit's seed was sown,  
Surely 'tis thou who knowest : for methinks  
Thou also grewest there.

PHAON

It may be so.

SAPPHO

Stood we not then as now? and raised as now  
The net between us?

PHAON

[*Strangely.*]

Somewhat I remember.

SAPPHO

And even as now thine eyes shone through the meshes,  
And mine in thine : was it not always so?

PHAON

[*Indifferent, begins to tie strands of the net.*]

'Tis broken.

SAPPHO

Ah, but shall be mended! I  
Will tie the fibres.

[*In silence now for a little, they stand mending the net:  
Phaon before it, dumbly engrossed in his task; Sappho,  
from behind, thrusting at times her white hand or arm  
through a gap to reach for a strand, and keeping her  
eyes burningly intent upon Phaon.*]

You are a boatman.

PHAON

Yes.

SAPPHO

Go you alone upon the water?

PHAON

Yes.

SAPPHO

When you are all alone, are you afraid?

PHAON

No.

SAPPHO

Put you ever far to sea?

PHAON

Sometimes.

SAPPHO

And have you never rowed to the mainland?

PHAON

Oft.

SAPPHO

By tempest?

PHAON

Once.

SAPPHO

A storm at twilight?

PHAON

Once.

SAPPHO

Oh, is it true, then, what the sea-wives tell?  
Was she a goddess?

PHAON

Long ago! 'twas long  
Ago. I was a boy, and that's all dark.

SAPPHO

And have you never seen her since she sprang  
Burning, upon the sands of Lydia?

PHAON

[*Momentarily ardent.*]

Sometimes methought—I know not.

SAPPHO

Still you dreamed  
You saw.

PHAON

How knowest thou?

SAPPHO

Tell me your dreams.

[*After a pause, Phaon—with a rapt smile—speaks. While he does so, Sappho—who has unwittingly tied his left wrist in one of the meshes where his hand rests—comes round to the other side of the net, and draws near to him.*]

## PHAON

Oft ere the day, while all the slaves are sleeping,  
I and my boat put out on the black water ;  
Under us there and over us, the stars sing  
Songs of that silence.

Soon then the sullen, brazen-hornèd oxen  
Rise in the east, and slowly with their wind-ploughs  
Break in the acres of the broad Ægean  
Furrows of fire.

So, many a time there, as I leaned to watch them  
Yoked in their glory, sudden 'gainst the sunrise  
Seemed that there stood a maiden — a bright shadow —

## SAPPHO

Ah, you beheld her !

[*From the colonnade, behind the farthest pillar, Alcæus and Anactoria enter and pause. Anactoria, nearly concealed by the pillar, points out to Alcæus the figures (on the opposite side of the net) of Phaon and Sappho, where, standing together, they are visible through the meshes. Alcæus' face darkens. Sappho, not seeing them, speaks in a low, impassioned voice to Phaon.*]

Look in my face. What were her features like —  
Hers, that bright shadow ?

## PHAON

I am tangled ; you  
Have tied me in the mesh.

## SAPPHO

I tied you ?

PHAON

Here —

My wrist.

SAPPHO

Did I do this?

PHAON

You see — the noose.

SAPPHO

But did you feel me tie this?

PHAON

No.

SAPPHO

[*Murmurs.*]

'Twas she!

Your hand is fast; know you who made it fast?

'Twas she: her fingers drew these knots.

PHAON

Untie them.

[*Alcæus, darkly, and Anactoria, radiant, withdraw unseen.*]

SAPPHO

Nay, but who knows what wise, unconscious plot  
Her deft, strange fingers wove to trap thee? Thou  
Perchance hast trespassed here too near her shrine,  
And, having stranded thee in thine own net,  
She now is loath to toss thee back again  
In the sea, to thy dumb mermen.



PHAON

[*Working with his right hand.*]

They are fine,  
These knots.

SAPPHO

And so perchance, for chastisement,  
She hath contrived this noose to keep thee here  
In speech with her, till thou shalt call to mind  
The face, and name the name, of her you love.

PHAON

I mind it well — her face. Unloose me.

SAPPHO

Look!  
Is it a dream-face still? — A shadow?

PHAON

No;  
'Tis with me days and nights. It is familiar.

SAPPHO

And yours to her familiar as these nights  
And days — and yet as worshipful and strange.

PHAON

[*Fascinated.*]

Untie me.

SAPPHO

First, her name! You may not slip  
Her noose, till you have guessed the name of her  
You love.

PHAON

I know it well.

SAPPHO

[*Smiling.*]

Methinks you boast  
To seem more skilled than she in guessing yours.  
How call you her ?

PHAON

Thalassa.

SAPPHO

[*After a pause.*]

What is that ?

PHAON

Her name.

SAPPHO

What's she ?

PHAON

A slave.

SAPPHO

To you?

And what is she

PHAON

She's mine ; maketh my fire.

SAPPHO

Ah !

PHAON

Loose me.

SAPPHO

You do not dwell alone, then ?

PHAON

No.

SAPPHO

You are wed ?

PHAON

We are slaves ; slaves are not wed.

SAPPHO

No ; but you love her.

PHAON

Yes ; children have I got with her ; the bairn  
Is stricken of the fever.

SAPPHO

*[Seizing the knife, cuts the meshes of the net.]*

Go ; you are free.

*[Phaon goes, silent.]*

Stay ; I have cut your wrist.

PHAON

A scratch.

SAPPHO

It bleeds.

PHAON

The bairn is sick and I must sacrifice  
A young dove to our lord Poseidon. Soon  
Its mother will be here, to pray with me  
For the babe's life.

SAPPHO

Where is its mother now?

PHAON

She is gone up to the city, to the house  
Of Sappho — the great lady.

SAPPHO

Oh, of Sappho!

What does she there?

PHAON

She is gone to the slave-quarters  
With crawfish and sea-tortoise for a feast.  
Methinks the lady's brother shall be wed  
To-morrow.

SAPPHO

She is gone to the slave-quarters. —  
Let see thy wrist. — The house of Sappho is  
A slave's house. — Ah, the blood!

[ *Tearing a shred from her garment, she binds his wrist.*]

I, too, have heard  
Of Sappho — the great slave.

PHAON

Nay, 'tis a noble  
Maiden of Lesbos. At Apollo's feast  
Once, in the crowd, I saw her fillet pass  
Above the virgins' heads into the palace,  
And all the people shouted : *Io Sappho !*

SAPPHO

Believe it not ; the people were deceived.  
I know her well and she was born in chains —  
A weak and wretched fellow-slave of thine,  
Whose proudest joy were but to bind the hurt  
Which she hath given thee, even as I do now.  
Dost thou not hear me ? Whereon dost thou gaze ?

PHAON

*[Looking off, left.]*

She is coming.

SAPPHO

Phaon ! Phaon !

PHAON

*[For the first time turning upon her a wild unconscious  
look of love, grasps his bound wrist tightly.]*

Ah ! it pains.

*[Enter THALASSA, bearing a willow basket of strange design.  
She is dishevelled with seaweed and her long, fair hair,  
tinged with the green of salt ooze, has partly slipped its  
fillet of vari-coloured shells. She moves impassively to  
Phaon, and speaks in a low monotone.]*

THALASSA

The day's dead ; the moon's with child ;  
The tide's full. I saw far out  
A shark's fin. — Poseidon calls.  
Hast killed it ?

PHAON

[*Pointing toward Sappho.*]

She bade me not.

THALASSA

[*Turning to Sappho, who shrinks from her behind the net,  
bows herself low in obeisance.*]

What Sappho forbiddeth thee  
The sea-god hath bidden thee. —  
The babe shall have sacrifice.

PHAON

[*Looking at Sappho, with a rush of thought.*]

'What, Sappho' — !

THALASSA

The sea-dove — where  
Didst hide it ?

PHAON

'Tis there.

[*As Thalassa goes toward the steps.*]

'Tis hers.

She bought it ; this bracelet gave  
To save its life.

THALASSA

Give it me.

[*Taking the bracelet from Phaon, she holds it against the sunset, turning and turning it in the light.*]

PHAON

[*Standing at a distance.*]

And are you Sappho? Yet did speak my name,  
And bind my wrist, and call yourself a slave!

SAPPHO

And art thou Phaon? Phaon for whom the stars  
Sang, and the brazen-hornèd oxen ploughed  
The acres of the sunrise? Yet thou lovest — this?

PHAON

You said: "I know her well, and she was born  
In chains — a fellow-slave!" What did you mean?

SAPPHO

[*Gazing, curious and incredulous.*]

Thalassa!

THALASSA

[*Slipping the bracelet over her arm.*]

It shineth fine:

See, Phaon!

SAPPHO

Thalassa, where's

Thy home?

THALASSA

On the beach we sleep  
Together.

SAPPHO

What dost thou for  
Thy lover?

THALASSA

For him I keep  
Food, fire, and the babe and boy.

SAPPHO

And what wilt thou do to make  
His labour and name to grow  
Magnificent over the isles?

THALASSA

[*Returns Sappho's enkindled gaze with proud serenity.*]  
More bairns will I bear to him.

SAPPHO

And they — when the frost of death  
Hath gathered both thee and him —  
Shall *they* too but live — to live?  
Be born still to bear again  
Procreative things that die?

PHAON

[*Having listened, vaguely fearful, moves now between the two women, and draws Thalassa, protectingly.*]

Cease, cease! — Thalassa, come with me. Her eyes!  
They burn us through the net. O come away!



## THALASSA

[*As she goes with Phaon, raises her arm with the bracelet,  
for Sappho to see.*]

This gold will I give the bairn  
To play with. — Keep thou the dove.

## PHAON

[*With a gesture of yearning toward Sappho, departs in the  
falling twilight, his voice broken with pain.*]

Thalassa!

[*Sappho, through the net, watching them together till they  
disappear, seizes then the net before her and, tearing it  
down, rends once the meshes with her hands.*]

## SAPPHO

Aphrodite! Aphrodite!

Now, now thy net is torn, thy bird is free.

[*Springing to the steps, she lifts the sea-dove and unwinds  
from about it the filmy scarf.*]

O darling bird, which art my beating soul,  
That Phaon captured on these wild sea-cliffs,  
Mount up, mount up! and nestle with thy wings  
Against the burning chlamys of heaven's queen  
There where her breast heaves highest. — Say to her:  
“Lady of love, almighty! This is Sappho —  
Her spirit — whom thou madest of that fire  
Which sleeps in Phaon's eyes. Lo, I am his,  
And I will make him mine!” — This say to her,  
My heart's bird, and beseech her, if she hears

My prayer, and sanctioneth my passionate  
Resolve, that she will speed thee back to me  
In token she approves. — Yet should she *not*,  
Here do I choose, in spite of sea and heaven,  
The sanction of myself.

[*Releasing the sea-dove.*]

Good-by, sweet bird !

[*On the steps, from her uplifted hand, she looses the bird, which takes wing into the sunset. Immediately Sappho springs up the steps and goes to the cliff's edge. There, standing against the subdued reflections of the Ægean, she follows the dove's far flight with her eyes.*]

[*Rising, the Herculaneum curtain shuts off the scene.*]

*Here follows the Pantomime of the First Interlude.*

*Vide Appendix.*

## ACT II



## ACT II

*Early night of the same day. The temple and sea gleam vaguely under the moon. Tapers are burning beneath the outstretched stone wings of the dove on Aphrodite's shrine, and the urn of Poseidon glows with fire — a signal light to mariners. Swinging lamps twinkle in the olive grove. On the edge of the grove, alone, stands Pittacus in reverie. From all sides out of the night, arise the soft string-sounds of sweet instruments and the music of far laughter. In the near distance (from the left) the voice of Alcæus sings.*

ALCÆUS

Wine, dear child, and truth  
And youth and these lips of thine !  
Wine from the crocus' cup  
And truth from the poppy's heart  
Drink to me  
While I think of thee !  
Think of me  
While I drink, drink  
Wine and youth  
And truth from these lips of thine.

PITTACUS

*[Coming slowly down the steps.]*

'Tis silent now — that song ; but still the silver shores  
Are drench'd with dews of it ; the olive groves — the  
air,

The ever-rhythmic waters — are in love. Of all  
 I only and the white stars are not amorous.  
 No more the wine of thee, dear child: the truth I  
 drink!

And drinking that, I pass from madness into peace:  
 Peace *now*, yet should I look once more into her eyes,  
 What *then*?

[*Enter from the grove a Figure, clad in the cloak of a Greek  
 soldier, wearing a helmet with long horse-hair plume,  
 a gold breastplate, and greaves of gold.*]

THE FIGURE

[*Approaching Pittacus.*]

‘Under these olives,’ lord of Mitylene!

PITTACUS

[*Starting.*]

Her brother, Larichus.

[*Turning toward the Figure, pauses bewildered.*]

Not Sappho — you!

SAPPHO

‘Under these olives’ — was it not the place?  
 Well met, O Pittacus!

PITTACUS

In such a garb —

SAPPHO

The wise Athene walked at Ilium  
Among the tetchy Greeks. The arbiter  
Of men needs govern as a man. — Where is  
Your tyrant's staff?

PITTACUS

*[Drawing back.]*

Keep from me, lest again  
I lose the tranquil planet of my peace.  
Let me depart from you.

SAPPHO

I will depart  
When you have given me what I come to claim.

PITTACUS

All but my quiet soul.

SAPPHO

That girdle of keys.

PITTACUS

*[Feeling at his side.]*

They are the city keys.

SAPPHO

Which one of them  
Unlocks the yoke-rings of the public slaves?

[*Pittacus loosens one.*]

Give me that one.

[*Reaching, snatches it from him with a glad sigh.*]

Now keep your quiet soul,  
Philosopher: I will no more affray  
Your sleep with my alarms.

[*She turns, and is leaving.*]

PITTACUS

[*Unmanned by her presence.*]

Yet do not go!

SAPPHO

Peace! You have put away with me the quest  
Of happiness. Yours is the living pall,  
The aloof and frozen place of listeners  
And lookers-on at life. But mine — ah! mine  
The fount of life itself, the burning spring  
Pierian! — I pity you. Farewell!

[*Exit, left.*]

PITTACUS

Farewell, thou burning one and beautiful!  
I pity *thee*, for thou must live to quench  
With thine own tears thine elemental fire.

[*Enter Phaon, right.*]



PHAON

*[Groping toward the altar, moans low.]*

Poseidon! O Poseidon!

PITTACUS

Still this slave  
That rises in my path to baffle me!

PHAON

Ah — ah, Poseidon!

PITTACUS

*[Drawing near.]*

Slave!

PHAON

*[Pausing, speaks confidently.]*

Are you the god?

PITTACUS

*[Half bitterly.]*

The god! I have deserved thy question, slave.  
Before, thy silence stung me — now thy words.

PHAON

Lord, lift it from me; take it from my eyes!  
Why have you cast its dimness over me?

PITTACUS

What wouldst thou have me lift?

PHAON

It closes down.

Stretch forth your arm and draw it back to you.

PITTACUS

Look near : canst thou not see me ?

PHAON

None I see !

The shore is gone ! It shutteth out the stars,  
Thicker and colder !

PITTACUS

What ?

PHAON

The fog ! The fog !

It shuts between us, and her far white face  
Wanes toward me like the lady in the moon,  
And now between the meshes I can see,  
Like shrines, her two eyes burning.

PITTACUS

Even this one !

Is there none then too low ? no piece of clay  
But passion there will make its chrysalis  
And kindle the worm wings ? Rest, thou poor churl !

[*Exit slowly, right.*]

## PHAON

[*Descending the steps supplicatingly.*]

Lord, be not angry ! Take it from before  
My face, and show me hers ! Sweep it away,  
And with your great hand show again the stars.

[*Enter from the grove Thalassa. Slung at her back, is a swaddled babe. At her side is a little boy of some four or five years — his sturdy, sun-tanned body naked, save for wreathings of sea-weed and kelp, partly concealing his torse and intertangling the oozy locks of his long hair. The child carries a tortoise' shell, with which — sitting upon the ground — he plays. Pausing at the top of the steps, Thalassa unbinds the infant from her back and takes it in her arms.*]

## THALASSA

Io, my bairn ! wakest thou ?  
Aye drowseth thy bonny head  
Low ! burneth thy little cheek  
That erst it was cold as ice.  
Io, my bairn ! droop thee not  
Away from thy mother's eyes ;  
Look up in them.

[*Descending the steps, Thalassa reaches the swaddled child toward Phaon, who stands by the altar, his face from hers, oblivious — staring ahead of him.*]

Phaon, take  
The bairn to thee : might it smile  
To lie in its father's arm  
And feel it strong. — Phaon !

[*Turning about vaguely toward her, Phaon takes the out-reached burden in his arms and holds it, rigid. Thalassa then, bending over, takes from her arm Sappho's bracelet and holds it dangling over the infant.*]

So!

Now shall my bairnling look up and see what the  
Lady of Lesbos  
Hath given its father — a little gold dolphin instead  
of the sea-dove  
For bairnling to hold in its fingers and play with and  
make it grow strong. Look!  
Its eyes are the green little stones that burn in the  
shallows at low-tide,  
And it bringeth a pearl in its mouth to please thee;  
aha! glint thine eye now  
And look where the scales of it shine and shine in my  
bairnling's moon-beam,  
And it hath a slippery silvery tail like a sea-maiden's.

[*Bending over closer.*]

Phaon!

It waketh not. Speak to it once! It sleepeth aye  
as in fire.

[*Snatching the babe from Phaon's arm and nestling it, passionate, she drops the bracelet on the ground.*]

A curse on the bright dark Lady of Lesbos! A curse  
on her shining  
Arm-ring! Ah, naught it availeth the fever. Go!  
Go and seek thou  
A victim and kill it. The wave-god is angry! worse  
is the bairn. — Go!

But seek first the house of Sappho and give her the gold thing back. — Go !

*[Phaon moves a dazed step, then remains motionless. Turning away, Thalassa, her face bent near to the babe in her arms, goes slowly up the steps.]*

Io, my bairn ! Come away.  
Now under the holy beam  
Thy mother will pray for thee  
That soon thou shalt wake and smile.  
Io, my bairn ! droop thee not  
Away from thy mother's heart.

*[She passes into the temple. The little boy is about to follow, but, seeing the bracelet at Phaon's feet, he runs back, and lifts it in his hand to his father.]*

#### THE CHILD

Babbo !

#### PHAON

Thy voice it is ! Bion, thy face !  
Methought it had been hers till thy young eyes  
Shone through her misty hair : and now that mist  
Fades in the moon away.

*[Smiling at the child, he sits on the altar steps and takes him in his arms.]*

How creptst thou here,  
Sand-snail ? Aye stickest to thy Babbo's side  
Like a spar of drift-wood. Ever at evening  
When roweth Babbo weary to the beach,  
Thou springest from the kelp, climbest his knees,

Showest thy day's sport. Tighter, tighter, bairn,  
Thine arms about me! Keep thy father fast. —  
Thou little piece of me, grow not so tall!  
Taller than the iris-reeds that water-maids  
Make into pipes for Pan to play upon.  
Soon too shalt thou be ripe for him to play.  
Nay, whither now? What new sport bringest here  
To show me? — Tortoise! A young turtle's shell:  
And was thine own catch? Flung him on the  
back!  
Brave kill! — What shineth in thy fingers there?  
Show me what 'tis.

[*The Child lifts to him again the dolphin-bracelet of Sappho.  
Phaon, staring at it, starts to his feet with his former  
gesture of passionate groping.*]

Poseidon! Ah, Poseidon!  
Once more, once more, why blurrest thou the  
world!  
Lift it away! Thy mist is over all.  
Show me the path to her.

[*With wondering eyes, the Child takes Phaon's hand as if to  
lead.*]

'Tis bitter cold,  
And is thy hand so small and warm? Lead on —  
[*Slowly the Child leads his father up the steps toward the  
colonnade.*]

'Tis ticklish walking on the wet weed-slime  
And naught but cloud to lean on — Lead the  
way.  
Her house is yonder where the breakers are.

[*Reëntering with the infant from the temple, Thalassa steps forward between the first and second pillars. There, taking the bracelet from the boy's hand, she draws him with her away from his father and returns to the temple door.*]

THALASSA

This gold will I give to her  
Back. Go thou to Sappho's gate  
And ask of what hour to-night  
She cometh to the temple. We  
Shall wait thee here. Come to us!

[*She goes into the temple with the children. Phaon — his face lifted, his hand feeling before him — passes slowly off through the colonnade.*]

PHAON

Poseidon, — thy hand again!

[*Exit.*]

[*The voice of Alcæus calls outside in the olive-grove.*]

ALCÆUS

Boy! — Iacchus! — Boy!

[*Enter Alcæus, accompanied by an Ethiopian slave boy, and followed by Sappho, disguised as before, now carrying a spear. Alcæus, wreathed with grape leaves, is adorned fantastically as a Bacchanalian. The slave, likewise draped with vines, bears upon his head and shoulders a bulging wine-sack made of a skin. This (sinking upon one knee) he supports thus as upon a salver at Alcæus' side, and lifts to him, from beneath it, a shallow, black-figured drinking cup.*]

ALCÆUS

Here, here, thou sack-stool! Down,  
And hold the pigskin for the bridegroom. Wait!

[*Addressing the cloaked figure of Sappho.*]

Hail, Larichus! hail, bridegroom home again!  
To Dionysus I thy welcome pour. —  
The cup! —

[*Filling it from the sack.*]

I charge thee, bird from Lydia,  
When Atthis keeps thy house in Lesbos, plant  
No other tree before the vine! And so  
Sleep long and make your nest in grape-leaves.  
Drink!

And so for song:

[*Singing.*]

Wine, dear child, and truth  
And youth and these lips —

SAPPHO

[*Turning from the cup.*]

No wine for me.

ALCÆUS

No bride for Larichus!  
For what is love but grape-juice? brides, but grapes?  
And lovers — wine-skins! Look you on this sack  
My caryatid here is holding — This  
Whilome was pig and grunted in the bog  
For water-nuts and mire: a sow's first-born  
With bristles, Hyacinthus of the herd!

[*Pouring from the sack and drinking.*]



Behold him now — a vessel for us gods,  
 Swelling with Cyprian nectar. O translation!  
 Yet such a pig was Pittacus, who now  
 Swelleth with love of Sappho.—

[*Drinking.*]

Nay, but we —

Before we fell in love, were *we* not swine  
 Compared to this we are?

[*Patting the wine-sack.*]

I say, for one,  
 The Arcadians crunched acorns and no slander  
 To them; and as for me —

[*Singing.*]

O Ajax was a king, not I!  
 I fell by the kiss of the Cyprus-born —  
 And though Hebrus be the most plentiful of rivers  
 yet 'tis said: from nothing,

[*Inverting his empty cup.*]

nothing cometh. More, boy!

SAPPHO

Where's Atthis?

ALCÆUS

Where's thy sister? Where's the song-dove?  
 Where's Sappho?

SAPPHO

[*Starting.*]

You've not answered me.

ALCÆUS

All's one !

I say, there lives a kind of four-wing'd Muse,  
Quadruple-eyed and double-filleted,  
Called indiscriminately Sappho — Atthis;  
Find one, find both ; for they be always arm  
And neck together. Nay, but Larichus,  
Patience and wait! As I am drunk, henceforth  
I am thy brother : Sappho loveth me.

SAPPHO

Since when ?

ALCÆUS

By Heracles, I know not : here  
To-day upon this ground, she swooned all pale  
Because another loved me ; and she bade  
Me meet her here to-night. — Good lad, thy hand  
And blessing !

*[Sappho draws slightly away.]*

What !

SAPPHO

I wish you joy of her.

ALCÆUS

And not thy hand upon it ?

SAPPHO

To be honest,  
I cannot deem you happy.

ALCÆUS

With thy sister !

SAPPHO

These sisters are not all they seem to be.

ALCÆUS

But Sappho !

SAPPHO

I perhaps know her too well.

ALCÆUS

And doubt she loves me ?

SAPPHO

Nay, far otherwise.

I doubt if ever she saw form of man,  
Or maiden either, whom — being beautiful —  
She hath not loved.

ALCÆUS

But not with passion —

SAPPHO

That breathes to her is passion ; love itself  
All-passionate.

All

ALCÆUS

Thou goadest me with thorns. —  
This evening — Nay, why should I tell thee this?  
And yet I will: — At sunset, here I saw  
Thy sister speaking with a public slave.

SAPPHO

[*Withdrawing.*]

Ah!

ALCÆUS

If I thought — but I will tell thee more.  
Here hung a net suspended, and they stood  
Together, speaking low — I watched them yonder.  
The slave was mending. Somehow he had got  
One of his hands entangled in the mesh,  
And she — I could not plainly watch her through  
The net — methought she peered into his face.

SAPPHO

Ah!

ALCÆUS

So I left them.

SAPPHO

Did you stay to see  
No more?

ALCÆUS

There was one with me.

SAPPHO

[*Quickly.*]

Who?

ALCÆUS

No matter.

But him — that slave! Sappho to speak with him  
On the temple steps! — The thought hath maddened  
me.

Why art thou silent? Dost thou deem it nothing  
That she should stoop to him?

SAPPHO

She could not stoop

To him.

ALCÆUS

By heaven! I'd have his vermin heart  
Upon a spit and roast it — were it so;  
But I am drunk to think it. — Boy, I pray you  
When next you meet your sister, say no word  
Of what I saw; but tactfully you might  
Whisper some praises of me. Wait a little,  
I'll run and find her.

[*To the wine-slave.*]

Come!

[*Calling back.*]

And Atthis too!

I'll tell her thou art waiting here to clasp  
Her neck with Lydian pearls. Ho bride and groom!

[*Nabbing the slave-boy by the ear, he departs with him, singing.*]

Fetch me a Teian  
Goblet of gold !  
Life is a cubit,  
Love is a span.  
[*Exit.*]

SAPPHO

[*After a pause.*]

Soon shall the moon on the waters  
Sleep, and the Pleiades ; midnight  
Come and the darkness be empty,  
I in the silence — be waiting.

Phaon ! Phaon ! — where must I  
Seek thee ? Send me thine omen !

[*Remotely from the grove sounds the voice of Alcæus, singing.*]

ALCÆUS

Love me, drink with me, bloom with me, die, love !  
Garlands for me are thine.  
Mad when I am, share *thou* of my madness,  
Wise, be thou wise with me.

[*From between the temple-tapestries appears Bion, the child. Running to the grove, he lifts from the ground a broken olive-bough, with lithe green shoots. These he strips of their leaves and twines, snake-like, round the main stem, which he flourishes blithely as a staff. Discovering then the tortoise-shell which lies near the steps, he runs to pick it up.*]

SAPPHO

[*Watching him.*]

At play — a luck-child ! Here's my happy omen.

[*Taking the shell, Bion is about to return to the temple, when, seeing the cloaked Figure, he pauses and stares.*]

SAPPHO

Well, water-elf ? Upon what dolphin's back  
 Or oily bladder rodest thou here to land ?  
 Why dost thou pierce me with those sea-blue eyes,  
 As though they saw me in as guileless state  
 As thy small body is ? Dost thou perchance  
 See through this manly corselet and suspect  
 This strutting Menelaus, that he wears  
 Within, a heart more coward-womanly  
 Than Paris ? Stare not so, but answer me.  
 Ah, now I know thou art a water-boy,  
 For wave-sprites all are dumb to mortals, speak  
 Only to mermaids and to weedy Triton,  
 Their father. Come, what hast thou there ?

[*The boy holds out the tortoise-shell and as, taking it, Sappho sits upon the altar steps (at the right), the child comes and stands near.*]

A shell !

A turtle's house ! — and once upon a time —  
 Sprite, wilt thou hear a story ?

[*The child nestles close.*]

Long ago

There lived another turtle, and he died  
 And left his shell-house empty by the waves,

And there a goddess bore a little boy  
Named Hermes, and when he was four hours old  
He was as tall as thou art,

[*Playfully twitching his branch of olive.*]

Nay, methinks

By thy caduceus, boy, thou shouldst be *he*,  
And I that goddess. — Play, then! So he walked  
Beside the waves and found the empty shell,  
(Like this) and took a golden thorn —

[*Taking from under the helmet a hair-pin of gold.*]

like this,

And turned and turned the thorn — like this — and  
bored

Nine holes in either side, and drew through them  
Nine strings —

[*Lifting the lyre which Alcæus left behind on the ground.*]

like these, and so he made the shell

To sing

[*Striking the lyre.*]

like this, and sitting in the spray

He sang with it a song — a song like this : —

[*Singing.*]

Hollow shell, horny shell,

Wake from slumber.

Long — too long — hast thou lain

Deaf and silent.

Where the pulse blooms in gold —

Moon- and sun-rise —

Thou didst creep slow and dumb,

Seeing nothing.



Yet above thee gleamed and swung  
Star and swallow,  
And around thee, lost in song,  
Lovers mingled.

Horny shell, hear'st thou not  
What I murmur?  
Wake! my breath is on thee warm.  
Wake! I touch thee.

[*Throwing away the lyre, Sappho starts up, and clasping the child close, speaks passionately.*]

Ah, little Hermes, pray for me! Thou only  
Whose dumb child-cry the immortals hearken, go  
And kneel to thy grandsire, the great Poseidon,  
And tell him thou didst meet with a bright being,  
Nor man nor woman, but a spirit both,  
That bade thee intercede for him — for her,  
That all the wild desire of this wild heart  
May be to-night fulfilled. Pray him, through you,  
To yield my love to me. Run, Hermes! — run!

[*The Child, with eyes of wonder, springs up the steps toward the temple. On the way, seeing the lyre lying where it has been thrown, he drops the tortoise-shell and, taking with him the lyre, runs into the temple. This Sappho, having turned away introspectively, does not perceive. From the olives now the voice of Atthis calls. — Entering, she rushes forward with outstretched arms.*]

ATTHIS

Larichus — Welcome home, my Larichus!

[*Shrinking back.*]

Ah me, what are you?

SAPPHO

[*With a smile.*]

Am I, then, so changed ?

ATTHIS

Sappho ! but thou art cruel. Where's thy brother ?  
Alcæus said he waited for me here.

SAPPHO

Myself am all thy lovers that are here.  
Why do you sob ?

ATTHIS

[*Throwing herself on the marble bench.*]

He never will return.

SAPPHO

[*Leaning over her.*]

I loved thee, Atthis, long and long ago,  
Even when thou wert a slight and graceless child,  
And should I let this soldier-brother come  
And steal thee now away ?

ATTHIS

He does not come.

Why have you done this to me ? Why are you  
Clad in his armour ? Why have you deceived  
Alcæus, and now me ?

[*From the colonnade Anactoria enters, in moody revery.*]

SAPPHO

*[Indicates her to Atthis.]*

Come, ask of her.

*[Going toward the colonnade.]*

'Toria !

*[Atthis rises slowly, and looks after her.]*

ANACTORIA

*[Starting from her thoughts, looks in amazement.]*

Is it you ?

SAPPHO

Have I not kept

My promise well ?

ANACTORIA

But —

SAPPHO

He hath been here.

ANACTORIA

He !

SAPPHO

Alcæus : his love-lesson hath begun.  
Did I not tell thee I would teach him well ?  
Leaving me now, he's gone to look for me,  
And looking for his love, he is to find  
*You.*

ANACTORIA

Me?

SAPPHO

There in the temple I have left  
My violets. Go you and put them on  
And come again.

[*On Anactoria's face slowly there dawns a light of passionate triumph.*]

ANACTORIA

[*Raising her clenched hands.*]

Oh! this is wonderful!

[*She turns and goes into the temple. Atthis comes wondering to Sappho.*]

ATTHIS

And is it for her sake you wear this garb?

SAPPHO

For her sake? No; not all; nor to rebuke  
Alcæus, all. But there are motives, girl,  
To guess which thou wouldst tremble, for thou art  
What thou wert born — a soft bride to be wooed,  
And 'Hymenæon!' was thy cradle song;  
But I — Listen yonder!

[*Distantly the deep voices of men are heard, lifting a rude and intermittent chant, which soon recurs — wild and low — more near.*]

## THE VOICES

*Akoue, Poseidon !*

## SAPPHO

Upward from the shore  
The men-slaves and the beach-folk now are bringing  
Their offerings here to the sea-god, for  
Fair weather on the morrow. — There perhaps  
Among them, there among the dark sea-faces,  
Ruddy with wine and passion, unaware  
My lover walks — a dumb and dreamy slave  
Yearning for liberation. *Therefore, Atthis,*  
I have put on this garb, that as a man  
I still may search those faces of the night  
Till I shall peer within that bondman's eyes  
And set his spirit free.

*[As Atthis, with a start of half comprehension, is about to speak.]*

Hush ; do not guess,  
But go now with thy servant to my house  
And wait for Larichus. — Fear not for me.

*[Atthis kisses Sappho's hand and goes in awe.]*

*[Groups of sea-slaves now have begun to enter in the moonlight — rough, forbidding presences of rude physical power and superstition ; some are wrapped in cloaks, others are almost naked, their sun-darkened flesh branded with symbols of their owners ; all are bare-headed and without weapons. Bringing in their hands their sea-offerings, — shells, coral, kelp, and other simple tokens, — they place these on the top step before the temple, and moved vaguely — now some, now others — to utter*

*their discontinuous chant, gather upon the steps and before the temple. Thus, for a minute or more, there transpires only pantomime. Upon the entrance of the slaves, Sappho at first turns instinctively away from them, and draws her cloak more closely about her. Yearningly, however, she turns back and moves among them — silent, searching. Now she joins a group of three that are drinking from a stone wine-jar, scans them, and turns elsewhere to one who is laying his gift of coral before the altar; from him too she turns and, touching a stooping form, peers wistfully an instant at the eyes upraised there to hers, then moves toward other forms obscure in the shadows.]*

#### THE SEA-SLAVES

*Ion, Poseidon !*

*[At this cry of the slaves, the tapestry at the temple door parts, and there enters — clad in dark purple and green — the PRIEST OF POSEIDON, attended by two Acolytes (who gather up the offerings). The Priest raises his long trident staff, at which the slaves fall upon their faces, prostrating themselves with their low cry.]*

#### THE SEA-SLAVES

*Chaire, Poseidon !*

*[Sappho alone remains standing, at once wistful and imperious. The Priest motions toward her with his staff.]*

#### SAPPHO

Biddest thou me bow down, O Silent One?  
 Not with these abject children of the earth,  
 Nor to thy god. — Not to thy pitiless  
 God of the generations, pain and death,

Whom I defy ! This day did I release  
Out of his clutch a dove of sacrifice  
Despite of him ; and of these nameless slaves  
Bow'd to his yoke, one — one will I set free  
And lift as an immortal at my side  
This night, in scorn of thee and thy Poseidon.  
Put back thy trident : that is powerless  
To sway me, for unseen the deathless birds  
Of Aphrodite ward me with their wings  
Inviolably free, and passionate  
To dare. Thy god is not my god ; thy law  
Is not my law.

[*Turning from the temple and the priest — who remains impassive, majestically mute — Sappho, pursuing her search among the dark forms, passes quickly from the scene (right).*]

[*As she goes, one of the prostrate slaves on the temple steps, who has partly raised himself during her speech, rises now alone and gazes after her. It is Phaon. Standing erect among the bowed forms of his fellow-slaves, he moves a few steps toward the place of Sappho's departure, and pauses. The trident of the Priest touches his shoulder, but he does not feel it. The other slaves rise menacingly and, muttering, are about to force him prostrate before the Priest, when the latter intervenes and motions them away. They depart slowly, uttering their chant ; the Priest and Acolytes reënter the temple. All this Phaon neither heeds nor sees. Left alone, he stands gazing still where Sappho has departed — in his face the struggle of an awaking consciousness.*]

[*Outside from the colonnade, some one whistles. The sound is repeated. Phaon turns absently and looks back.*]

ALCÆUS

[*Outside.*]

Here, water-dog!

Stand where thou art.

[*Entering.*]

Where art thou skulking, cur?

PHAON

[*Bending.*]

What would you, lord?

ALCÆUS

What makest at this hour  
Here by the holy temple?

PHAON

Seeking, lord.

ALCÆUS

What, charity? A meal of maggots? Some  
Goat's entrails by the altar? What wast seeking?

PHAON

[*Slowly.*]

A dream.

ALCÆUS

[*Bursting into shrill laughter.*]

Ha — ha, Apollo! my Apollo!  
Behold thy Trojan Kalchas lives again,  
Born of a Lesbian sea-bitch! Lo, a dog



Hath sniffed thine altar and become a seer  
And prophet! Come, my dream-seeker, canst read  
The flight of birds? Look there — those moonlit  
doves —

What mean their dreamy circlings? Prophecy!

PHAON

*[Looking over the dim sea, where for a moment a flutter of  
doves is visible, shrinks back superstitiously.]*

Death.

ALCÆUS

*[His shrill derision checked by a sudden awe.]*

Here's enough of this. I, too, am seeking.  
The lady Sappho spoke with thee to-day —  
Answer me, churl: what said she?

PHAON

*[Slowly straightening to his erect stature.]*

She will tell.

ALCÆUS

So shalt thou, scavenger;  
And if thou'd 'scape the knot-whip,  
Speak quickly.

PHAON

I have spoken.

ALCÆUS

*[About to burst into passion, pauses and squints maliciously.]*

Oho, an avaricious  
Lick-bones!

*[Taking from a pouch, hands to Phaon a coin.]*

An itching mongrel!  
Here, hound; here's for thy mange.  
Speak; we'll not tell the lady.

*[Phaon, looking from the coin in his hand to Alcæus' face, silently tosses the coin over the cliff. Alcæus starts passionately.]*

Slave, thou shalt have the rack  
For this; I'll have thy master  
Flay thee.

PHAON

I have no master.  
I am a public slave;  
The city owns me.

ALCÆUS

*[Seizing the spear which Sappho has left behind, strikes with it at Phaon.]*

Let  
The city burn thy carcass.

PHAON

*[Wresting from him the spear.]*

Lord, you have drunk too deep.

ALCÆUS

Boy — Iacchus! Ho, boy! here!

[*Enter the Ethiopian slave-boy.*]

My guards! run to my garden  
And fetch them thither. — Run!

[*Exit the slave.*]

By heaven, it grows now plainer  
Why Sappho hath not met me:  
She hath prepared a feast  
Of tidbits for a sea-dog,  
And keeps her chamber.

PHAON

She

Is not at home.

ALCÆUS

So *thou*

Hast sought her there!

PHAON

I left

Lately her house.

[*Reënter Sappho, now without her helmet — her dark locks falling about her breastplate in the moonlight. She stands unobserved, intense, watching the two.*]

ALCÆUS

'Twas so, then!

Her brother said so. Faugh!  
Faugh! how the mad night reeks it!  
A slave! — O Larichus,  
Thou spakest well: These sisters  
Are not all that they seem!  
But she — the Muse! — to turn  
Circe, and set her meshes  
To catch a water-rat —  
A public, prowling slave!

PHAON

No more!

ALCÆUS

But this is Lesbos,  
Where all are lovers! This  
Will sing most musically  
Set to the lyre: how Sappho,  
Enamour'd of the sea-god,  
Invoked the slime, to yield  
As substitute —

PHAON

[*Approaching near.*]

No more!

ALCÆUS

A wharf-rat for her lover.

PHAON

*[Bursting his culminated self-control, strikes with clenched hand Alcæus to the ground, where he lies his length, unconscious, at the foot of the steps. Ignoring him there, Phaon lifts his face with an exultant, dreamy smile, speaking low.]*

Lord, the stars !

Thy stars again ! how glorious they burn !

SAPPHO

*[Coming forward.]*

At last !

PHAON

*[Gazing in her face.]*

Still they are burning there.

SAPPHO

At last

Thy hand is lifted and thy blow is fallen.  
Look ! at thy feet he bows, alive and prone  
From his proud pedestal : this lord of lords.  
Ha, Aphrodite ! in this man of men  
How I have triumphed !

PHAON

Are you not the same  
That stood amidst us, with thy helmet plume,  
And scorned the silent god ?

SAPPHO

Wert thou so near  
And yet I found thee not ?

PHAON

Your spirit found me ;  
Its voice awoke me 'mongst the herded slaves  
And bade me rise towards you, for it said —  
'One — one will I set free.'

SAPPHO

That slave is freed !  
There lies his bondage stricken in the dust  
By his own hand.

PHAON

[*Bewildered.*]

My hand ?

SAPPHO

Was it not thine  
That felled him yonder ? Was it not thy soul  
That to his mockery cried out " No more ! "  
And smote him mute ?

PHAON

Thou sayest it was I :  
Speak on ! — Even so thou spakest by the net.

SAPPHO

Canst thou then name me?

PHAON

Sappho.

SAPPHO

Hush; he breathes  
Less hard; come hither.

[*They move away to the right.*]

All the waning time  
Of all the stars have I kept watch for thee.

PHAON

And I have groped in darkness — toward thine eyes.

SAPPHO

Who shall constrain Apollo 'neath the sea  
When he uplifts his glad brow from the fens  
Aspiring to inevitable noon?  
Who shall constrain Phaon a slave?

PHAON

Speak still!

SAPPHO

Out of thy dim fens hath thy godhead dawned  
Insufferably fair. O Phaon, that  
Which thou hast struck already from thy soul  
I loose now from thy body.

[*With the key of Pittacus, Sappho unfastens the bronze yoke-  
ring from the neck of Phaon, and takes it from him in  
her hand.*]

Know you this?

PHAON

My name-ring 'tis.

SAPPHO

[*Reads from the characters in the metal.*]

‘Phaon of Lesbos — slave.’

PHAON

[*Pressing his hand to his throat.*]

How light! — how light and strange! Methought it  
was

Even myself, a part of me.

SAPPHO

Hear how it falls now — a dead thing  
Back to the dust.

[*She drops the bronze ring, which falls with a muffled sound to the earth. Watching this, Alcæus, who from his swoon has awakened and listened with fierce self-restraint, now, unobserved, crawls on the ground to within reach of the ring, secures it, and returns silently, while Sappho continues speaking to Phaon.*]

Never shalt thou, cramped again in thy sea-sleep,  
Wake at its twinge in thy sinews; never again in the  
noon-glare

Feel it scorch in thy flesh familiar shame, nor at  
bitter

Sundown, numbly, in winter, lay on thy drowsy blood  
its

Ache long accustomed.



PHAON

The clutch hath loosened ; the fingers of bronze  
are  
Loosened.

SAPPHO

And with them the yoke of contumely,  
scorn and the callous  
Scar of the drift-wood.

PHAON

What breath filleth my body with fire?  
What is the voice of this cloud that speaketh in flame  
to me ?

SAPPHO

Hear it!

Phaon of Lesbos is dead.

PHAON

Ah!

SAPPHO

Phaon of Hellas is risen !  
Phaon of all the Æolian isles — of the ages that  
will be  
Unto the Autumn of time : Phaon, the freedman of  
Sappho.

ALCÆUS

*[Faintly from where he lies.]*

Larichus!

*[There is a moment of silence, without motion. Slowly then Sappho points to her spear on the ground, speaking to Phaon.]*

SAPPHO

To my service, bondslave: bear  
My spear for me.

PHAON

*[Lifting the spear, precedes Sappho, as she moves to go.]*

Forever!

*[Exit right.]*

ALCÆUS

*[Half raising himself.]*

Larichus!

SAPPHO

*[Pausing.]*

Who speaks to me?

ALCÆUS

*[Rising.]*

A liar, for he names  
You Larichus: a liar and a dupe  
Of yours.

SAPPHO

Alcæus, you have listened — heard?

ALCÆUS

Laughter from high Olympus have I heard :  
'Sappho the Rat-catcher hath speared her quarry !'  
Cries blithe Terpsichore. — You shall not go ;  
You shall not, till you hear me.

[*Sappho, who has started away, pauses again in serene contempt, and looks full at Alcæus.*]

SAPPHO

Well ?

ALCÆUS

Forgive

The wine-god for my words. But that is past  
And I am bitter earnest. — Men are born,  
Not made ; and what is bred is bred in soul  
And brain more deep than sinews.

SAPPHO

Well ?

ALCÆUS

A slave

Shall always be a slave. No yoke of bronze  
Cast off can liberate him.

SAPPHO

Yet a slave

Could bid Alcæus bow and eat the earth  
Even at his feet.

ALCÆUS

Beware ! I love you.

SAPPHO

I

Love Phaon.

ALCÆUS

He —

SAPPHO

[*Bitingly.*]

‘Can I constrain a god?

Tether him? Clip his wings? Say *come* or *go*?

Love is a voyager’ — or hath this Love

Changed, since you scoffed at Anactoria?

ALCÆUS

*You* have upraised him, not himself; and he

Shall fall more basely from your height.

SAPPHO

Oh, I

Am sure of him as of this liberal air

I breathe. [*Reaching upward her arms.*]

This will not ever fail, nor Phaon.

ALCÆUS

[*Fiercely, staying her as she goes again.*]

Keep from him yet. One knowledge

I will not spare you now.

Look down: There in the caverns

Of sea-weed and the slime-ooze,

The tide creatures and reptiles

Seek in the dark their mates

And spawn their generations.

SAPPHO

[*Drawing back.*]

The Spring is universal.

ALCÆUS

Even as the Autumn.

[*Pointing below.*]*He*

Is one of those. His mate  
And brood are there. — Ha, Sappho!  
You did not know.

SAPPHO

[*Dreamily.*]

I knew.

ALCÆUS

You knew that Phaon —

SAPPHO

Was he not a slave,  
And now — no more?

ALCÆUS

Impossible! Art thou  
Sappho of Mitylene?

SAPPHO

Do you dream  
I am *not* she? or have you never known  
Sappho?

ALCÆUS

You are gone blind with passion.

SAPPHO

Blind !

Have you beheld through the obscuring world  
The Beautiful? There comes a day, Alcæus,  
When one of us, that for a million years  
Have gendered in the sun, looks upward in  
His face, and in the features there discerns  
Our own divinity. I am that one;  
And so the stumbling and unconscious ways  
Of nature are no longer mine : her currents,  
Self-foiled, obstructed, clogged, I sway to sure  
And passionate direction. Thenceforth I  
Am pilgrim and not pathway : destiny  
I am, no more the clay of destiny.

ALCÆUS

But Phaon —

SAPPHO

Have you felt the maker's joy  
Who out of clay sculptures Hyperion,  
Or out of silence shapes heart-moving song? —  
That is my joy of Phaon.

ALCÆUS

You are fooled ;  
Yourself are Nature's bondmaid.

SAPPHO

Little minds  
Muddy with resolution. — Go your ways,  
Alcæus, for I go now to my lover :  
Yea, knowing all *thy* knowledge do I go,  
And on his liberated soul I stake  
My hope — my life.

[*Exit right.*]

ALCÆUS

[*Springing after her, then pausing.*]

Sappho! — Ah, Muse of Vengeance !  
A medicine — a medicine for this !

[*Lifting in his hand the bronze yoke, he reads.*]

‘Phaon of Lesbos — slave.’

[*As he stands thus desperately intent, Anactoria enters from the temple, wearing the violet-wreath of Sappho. She walks direct to him and looks silently in his face, with fierce pride and yearning. At her presence, he starts and smiles faintly.*]

Her violets!

ANACTORIA

She sent them to you — so.

ALCÆUS

[*His look turning back from her to the yoke of bronze.*]

Put them away  
From you.

ANACTORIA

To one who hath herself been put  
Away, they should be fitting.

ALCÆUS

[*Watching some one approach.*]

Pittacus !

[*Enter in meditation Pittacus. Alcæus — his face lighting with sudden exultation — turns to his companion with a gesture of passionate deference.*]

Incomparable Anactoria,  
Beloved ! all those damnèd subtle chains  
Of Sappho thou hast struck away. Once more  
My vows and I are thine. — Hail, Pittacus !  
Your boon and blessing ! A betrothal boon  
On us, two foolish lovers reconciled.

ANACTORIA

[*Utterly bewildered.*]

Alcæus !

PITTACUS

You and Anactoria !

ALCÆUS

Will you deny true love its whims, and heap  
Embarrassment on her, who trembles there ?  
Enough she chooses me, your rival once  
And now your craving friend. 'Twas you who said  
'Forgiveness better is than punishment.'  
Therefore a boon, to prove it !



PITTACUS

What have I

Would please you ?

ALCÆUS

A mere nothing, yet my heart  
Is set upon it. You, my lord, are Tyrant  
Of Mitylene, and as such 'tis you  
Who own the public slaves. — A lover's whim,  
My lord ! — You will remember how to-day  
You struck one of these slaves — a fellow passing  
With drift-wood.

PITTACUS

Yes.

ALCÆUS

The blame was mine. I can't  
Forget his face. By heaven, I will requite  
That fellow. I would have him feel to-night  
As glad as I am. Sir — a foolish boon !  
Give him to me to be my body-slave.

ANACTORIA

No, no !

ALCÆUS

*[Reaching his arm toward her.]*

Dear love !

PITTACUS

How deep is wine—and truth!  
This spinning world, 'tis but a street-boy's top,  
And each must whip his own.

*[Passing on.]*

The slave is yours.

ANACTORIA

*[Starting after.]*

You do not understand.

ALCÆUS

*[Staying her.]*

'Tis you, sweet girl,  
Who have not guessed my purpose.

ANACTORIA

*[Trembling.]*

Tell me.

PITTACUS

*[From the colonnade.]*

Friends,  
If you shall chance to meet with Sappho, say  
That Pittacus, her friend, hath sailed for Sparta.

*[Exit.]*

ANACTORIA

*[Feverishly.]*

What would you do with Phaon? .

ALCÆUS

*[Kissing her hand, which she withdraws.]*

Can't you guess?

Love, I have purchased him to wait on you  
In public, when the girl-disciples meet  
And Sappho leads the singing.

ANACTORIA

*[Gazing at him, fascinated.]*

Horrible!

ALCÆUS

And at the festivals, amid the mirth  
And fluttered laughter of the maidens, Phaon  
Shall bear the wine-sack in, and pass the cakes  
To Sappho, where she sits beside you. — Come;  
Yonder's my black knave Iacchus. He is running  
Up from my garden. We'll go meet him.

ANACTORIA

*[Following impotent.]*

Why?

ALCÆUS

*[Seizing her arm and raising the yoke-ring in his other hand.]*

Why do the robins fly to meet the spring?

*[Exeunt, left.]**[Enter, right, Sappho and Phaon. Each has a hand upon the horizontal spear between them, and — until Sappho releases — they speak across it, lifting or lowering it in their mutual persuasion.]*

SAPPHO

'Tis mine.

PHAON

'Tis mine.

SAPPHO

You must not bear it more

In servitude.

PHAON

[*Pleadingly.*]

In service now !

SAPPHO

Even now ?

Yielded so soon, and all my victory  
Reversed ? — Nay, be it mine in the pursuit,  
For I have been your huntress.

PHAON

Him you sought

You have transformed. O Spirit, Woman,  
Whatso you are, the war-cry of your love  
Shouts in my blood and tingles in my brain  
For action and for freedom and for life.  
Let me go armed to-night — your conqueror.  
Into my hands — the spear !

SAPPHO

A little while  
Be conquered yet ; a little breathing-space  
Fear me — lest I shall fear.

PHAON

For what ?

SAPPHO

You are

Awakened to me from your torpid lair  
So newly masterful. My sudden wound  
Of liberty hath quickened into power  
Till now, imperious, you turn at bay  
And wrestle with me.

PHAON

[*Smiling.*]

Yield, then.

SAPPHO

O not yet!

Still let me be Diana — thou, my stag,  
And through the April uplands of the world  
Flee on, on, burning backward with thine eyes,  
And I forever kindled.

PHAON

Not that free

And lordly animal —

[*Setting his foot upon Bion's tortoise-shell beside him.*]

Look there, the thing

Which you awakened into ecstasy  
Of being — me, this soul you gaze upon.

SAPPHO

*[Looking from the shell to Phaon's face.]*

My playmate Hermes — grown to manhood : even  
So might he glance and smile.

PHAON

Hermes — what's he ?

SAPPHO

A little child I love. — My Phaon, share  
This weapon with me. Make not of me yet  
A woman only. Comrades let us be,  
Or children bargaining their captaincy —  
Agamemnon and his brother, hand in hand  
Against the Trojans.

PHAON

Childhood never trafficked  
Rapture like yours. You would not what you ask.  
*[Lifting high the spear, to which Sappho's hand still clings.]*  
Relinquish !

SAPPHO

Not — playfellow ?

PHAON

No.

SAPPHO

*[Releases her grasp, half fearfully.]*

My peer, then !

## PHAON

No, but your lord and lover! Nevermore  
Shall you be sovereign of your maiden will  
Or single in your fate. Not here with priest  
And song, but with a spear, you have betrothed me.

*[Raising the weapon above him, and smiling up at it.]*

O thou my spear, thou singest in my hand.  
Thou art my power and manhood. Face to face  
Thou pittest me in combat with the gods,  
And raising thee, my mind is raised up  
Confronting heaven, till from those clouds of fire  
This slavish world grows dim, and all that sways it —  
The tyrant's hate, the galley-master's goad,  
The sordid trader's dreams of avarice —  
Dwindle to impotence. Thine is the war  
Which shall not end with time — war with those gods  
That made men's misery.

*[To Sappho.]*

Belovèd, know  
What you have quickened, and if you would hear  
The chant of life my lips can never sing,  
Hark, hark now to the hymning of this steel!

*[From the cliff he hurls the spear into the night.]*  
There flies the first: ten thousand will I fling  
Because of you.

## SAPPHO

*[Going to his arms.]*

My lover!

[*Then, as Phaon embraces her, she draws back wistful, and peers in the moonlight after the fallen spear.*]

If its dart,  
Falling, should strike a dove !

PHAON

Turn not away.

Where are your thoughts deep wandered in the night,  
Or what, love, do they hear ?

[*Where they stand silent, from below the faint roar of the surf and a far love-song are dreamily distinguishable.*]

SAPPHO

[*Turning to him.*]

‘ The chant of life ! ’

Listen ! Your lifted spear hath been a signal  
For that world-music. Even as the master  
Lifteth his staff and all the temple-choir

Raise their clear chanting,  
So hath it waked those wild-sweet ocean murmurs  
Yonder — Thou hearest with me ! — where the  
crickets  
Melt with that human lover and the night-bird  
Over Mitylene.

PHAON

These are but thou ; and thoughts of thee are music.



SAPPHO

Nay, but *look* also ! On the glassy sea-floor,  
White as the moonbeam, how it rises ghostly  
There !

PHAON

'Tis a fog-bank.

SAPPHO

Yes, but the cloud is carved : against the night sky,  
Trembling, lifts the pearl horns of a lyre  
Curved, and a hand that holds a mighty plectrum  
Plays to Orion !

PHAON

Nay, 'tis a ship I see : her prow is curving  
Up from the cloudy billows, and her captain,  
Standing upon it, where the bending oarsmen  
Churn the bright star-foam,  
Points to the world beneath them — all its kingdoms  
Kindling with men, and to his one companion  
Speaks in the silence : ' All this will I conquer,  
Sappho ! '

SAPPHO

My master !

[*Enter, from the colonnade, Anactoria.*]

ANACTORIA

[*Wildly.*]

He is coming : go ! Go in the temple !

SAPPHO

Who

Is coming, 'Toria ?

ANACTORIA

Alcæus ! Oh,

Mad was I for his love, and blind with dread  
Of you. I did not dream his horrible  
Vengeance. Go in the temple.

SAPPHO

Why ?

ANACTORIA

In there

Is sanctuary.

[*To Phaon.*]

He can take thee not.

PHAON

Take *me* ?

ANACTORIA

Thou art his body-slave, his flesh,  
His chattels. Pittacus hath granted him  
Thee and thy freedom. He is coming now  
To seize thee.

PHAON

[*As Sappho, with a cry, goes to him.*]

I will greet him.

ANACTORIA

His guards — two score of spearmen.      Nay, he brings

SAPPHO

[*To Phaon.*]

My house will shelter us.      Come with me ;

ANACTORIA

You cannot leave ;  
The ways are held, his men surround this place.

SAPPHO

[*Tensely.*]

Is there no path unknown to them ?

PHAON

This one.

SAPPHO

The cliff-path, ah !    Quick, Phaon : we will go  
Here.

PHAON

You would dare this with me ?

SAPPHO

Yours ?      Am I not

PHAON

You will go ?

SAPPHO

Even to the underworld !

PHAON

Against the Tyrant's will?

SAPPHO

Against the gods'.

PHAON

*[Moves with swift decision.]*

Come, then ; my boat is there.

ANACTORIA

*[Imploringly, to Sappho.]*

Stay ! — there is death.

Your brother is returned. Stay in the temple  
Till I can bring him here.

SAPPHO

Not Larichus.

At dawn he brings his bride. They must not know  
This thing.*[Imperiously.]*

Go : keep it from them — for my sake.

ANACTORIA

*[Goes.]*

For thy sake would that I had killed myself !

*[Exit, left.]*

SAPPHO

[*To Phaon.*]

Look there : what gleams among the olives ?

PHAON

Spears.

They are coming.

SAPPHO

[*In dread, protectingly.*]

Phaon !

PHAON

See, the path falls sheer  
Into the wave — my arms your only staff.

[*Swinging from the cliff, Phaon takes footing upon the juttred path below, his face and shoulder only visible as he reaches upward to Sappho's support.*]

Still do you dare ?

SAPPHO

We must dare all to be  
Ourselves. — Your arms, love ! — Now to the world's  
end,  
The islands of the Cyclops in the seas !

[*Sappho and Phaon disappear below the cliff. As they do so there is heard the low rattle of greaves and, emerging on the edges of the scene, the points of spear-heads glisten. Simultaneously, from the temple, comes forth Thalassa — her babe at her breast — followed by Bion, who carries in his hands the lyre.*]

## THALASSA

[*Searching with her eyes.*]

He tarrieth long away —  
Too long for the fever ; yet  
At last will he come to me.

[*Stooping in the shadow of the pillar, she sits on the lowest step leading to the shrine. There, while the little boy, in his garb of sea-weed, wanders in the moonlight, thrumming the strings of the lyre with low, monotonous cadence, Thalassa clutches her babe close, and swaying her body with a strange rhythm, suckles the fever-stricken child. From there, as she sings, her voice floats mournfully in the night.*]

Hesper, Hesper,  
Eleleu !

Lord of evening, thou that bringest  
All that lovely Morning scattered —  
Eleleu ! Eleleu !

Lord, the sheep, the goat thou bringest,  
The child to its mother.  
Eleleu !

[*Slowly the Herculaneum curtain shuts off the scene.*]

*Here follows the Pantomime of the Second Interlude.*

*Vide Appendix.*

## ACT III





## ACT III

*Earliest daybreak is beginning to struggle faintly with the light of the low moon, muffled now by masses of slowly indrifting fog from the sea, in the background. Against this, stand out vaguely the outlines of the temple, uncertain shadows of which are cast upon the fog by the glow of the still blazing urn. Beside this urn, white-haired, clad in his dark-flowing purple and green, stands the Priest of Poseidon, replenishing it with fagots. All is silent, and the last of the swinging lamps in the olive grove flickers out.*

*As the Priest, leaning wearily on his trident-staff, moves slowly from the urn, there enters to him, from the temple, Phaon. About him is thrown a rough fisher's cloak. He greets the Priest in a low voice and points back to the temple.*

### PHAON

Father, she rests ; the holy vestals fetch her there  
Garments and warmth. — Ah, blessèd was thy beacon !

Calm

All night it gazed upon us like a parent's eye  
Guiding us home to refuge, when the lamps of heaven  
Themselves were swallowed up with black, insufferable

Fog. Father, speak ! What is this portent ? And  
this pang

Of cold and clutching cloud — what meaneth it, that  
never

Since I was child, can I remember like to this?  
Yet first methought I dreamed it: all last evening  
Darkly it hung with mist my mind; but now that fog,  
Which rolled and gathered in imagination, look!  
This air and actual world are palled and numb with  
it.

Oh, if this thing be more than earthly, tell!

[*The Priest turns away.*]

I had forgot thy vow of silence to the god.  
Yet answer me in sign: is it Poseidon's anger?

[*The Priest nods assent.*]

Yet wherefore is he angry? Hath some mortal  
broken

His law?

[*The Priest, nodding once more assent, moves past Phaon.*]

Stay, father! — Who? Who hath offended him?

[*The Priest gazes sadly into Phaon's face, then, giving no further sign, passes into the temple. Phaon starts, with a low cry of fear.*]

Ah me, Poseidon, lord! I have offended thee.

[*Going to the altar, Phaon prostrates himself to the earth and remains there, bowed. After a brief pause enter from the temple Sappho, clad in the white garment of a vestal. Seeing Phaon, she comes down furtively and stands beside him. For a moment Phaon does not see her. Then as with a shiver she touches his shoulder, he leaps up beside her, ardent.*]

Once more !

[*Pausing, he draws back in awe.*]

How art thou changed ! Scarce would I dream  
'Tis thou.

SAPPHO

The virgins they have clothed me.

PHAON

Have you come forth into the cold ?

Why

SAPPHO

Until the day ?

How long

PHAON

Already it grows dawn ;  
Were it clear, the cedars would be burning black  
Along the yellow hill-sky. You are chilled :  
Still you are trembling from the sea-damp. — Here !  
[*Taking his cloak from his shoulders, he throws it about  
her.*]

SAPPHO

It may be that ; it may be so.

PHAON

And warm thee.

Come in

SAPPHO

Phaon, no ; 'tis not the night  
Hath deadened so my heart ; hardly it beats.  
'Tis not the chill, the faintness and the fog.

PHAON

What is it, Sappho ?

SAPPHO

[*Turning to him, impetuous.*]

Ah ! why are we here ?

Wherefore have you returned and brought me back ?  
Why are we not still there — out there alone  
Together in thy little groping boat,  
Lost, rudderless, amid the unimagined  
Glooms of the gray Ægean ! Over us —  
No wider than the space betwixt our faces —  
The fog had built a tent, and shut away  
Sky, shore, and men and temples, yet our eyes  
Had lighted there an inward universe  
More vast, wherein our hearts stood still, and breathed  
The awful passion of the breathing tide.  
Ah, why did you turn back ?

PHAON

[*Hesitant.*]

You would have perished ;  
Twice in my arms you fainted with the cold.

SAPPHO

Not with the cold — with ecstasy of fire !

PHAON

[*Uneasily, veiling his deeper reason.*]

This holy beacon gleamed our only sign  
Of haven; 'twas the god who summoned us. —  
Food, warmth, and life were here for you.

SAPPHO

And fear!

Portent and fear.

PHAON

What fear?

SAPPHO

Unspeakable!

[*To herself.*]

Whilst we returned, methought I heard again  
The croon of that eternal cradle-song,  
And — all of mist — the awful Mother rose,  
Outreaching on the air her vacant arms.

[*Wildly, to Phaon.*]

O better to have died together there  
Than here — to separate.

PHAON

That will not be.

SAPPHO

Phaon, *they* will find you here. Come to the boat  
Once more.

[*Taking hold of him as to go.*]

Come back with me.

PHAON

*[Putting her hand away.]*

You know not yet

The mightiest cause of my return.

SAPPHO

The fog,

You said. But see—the dawn ! The fog will lift.

PHAON

The fog will never lift—if we go yet.

SAPPHO

What do you mean ?

PHAON

*[His face taking on a look of superstitious fear, his body—  
slowly—a slave-like bearing, he half whispers mysteriously.]*

Sappho, I know the fog ;  
Since boyhood I have known. *This* is not fog.  
This is the wrath and darkness of the god :  
*I* have offended him.

SAPPHO

Look not like that !

PHAON

The dove I should have killed for him — it lives ;  
You took it from me, but it was Poseidon's.  
Therefore I have returned to appease his anger.

## SAPPHO

Phaon, drift not away ! In pity of  
Our love, drift not away.

## PHAON

Till I have sacrificed.

This will not lift  
[*Going.*]

Wait but a little  
And I will find a victim.

## SAPPHO

[*With imperious appeal.*]

Do you say  
This — you, that for our liberty defied  
With me fate and the gods ?

PHAON

That blasphemy  
Hath raised this cloud. The sea-god demands death,  
And I must sacrifice.

## SAPPHO

Stoop not to this !  
Our wills are their own Providence, and shape  
The mandates of the immortals to their ends.

PHAON

**Wait : I will not be long.**

SAPPHO

[*Following.*]

It must not be.

Phaon, this thought itself is bondage. Think :  
 To you I yielded as my guiding star,  
 And now if you shall fall, our heaven and we  
 Shall have one darkness. Be once more thyself —  
 Master of life.

[*From off the scene, left, is heard the low thrumming of a  
 stringed instrument. Phaon stops to listen.*]

PHAON

What sound is that ?

SAPPHO

[*After a pause.*]

Alcæus,

His lyre it is ; the tone of it I know. —  
 Come back, or he will seize you. Phaon !

PHAON

[*Raising his clasped hands, exultant.*]

Lord !

Thy victim ! Thou hast sent him to my hands.

SAPPHO

You know him not : his guards are with him there  
 To do his vengeance. He will violate  
 The temple in the dark, and murder you.

[*Phaon hastens to the altar.*]

What would you do ?



PHAON

*[Seizing the knife of ritual.]*

He comes for sacrifice ;  
The god, not I, hath summoned him.

*[Calling into the mist.]*

Alcæus !

SAPPHO

*[Imploring.]*

Phaon, be silent.

PHAON

*[Mounting the steps toward the colonnade.]*

Mockest thou me, Alcæus ?  
Makest thou me thy slave to tinkling strings  
And thrum of music ?

SAPPHO

*[Clinging to him.]*

Hush.

PHAON

*[Putting her away.]*

Come, take me ; here

Am I.

SAPPHO

*[Numbly.]*

The star is fallen.

PHAON

[*To Sappho.*]

Fear no more ;

I have but drawn him on. Now will I be  
Silent — and sure.

[*Crouching behind the second pillar, he holds the long knife drawn and, waiting, murmurs to Sappho, who stands pale and spellbound.*]

Soon shall the fog be lifted.

[*The low thrumming sounds draw near and nearer, along the colonnade, until suddenly Phaon, listening, springs forward and strikes blindly behind the pillar in the obscurity.*]

Thy blood upon me !

[*He leaps back.*]

A CHILD'S VOICE

[*Cries in the dimness.*]

Babbo!

[*From behind the pillar, Bion, the child, with arms outstretched to Phaon, staggers forward and falls, dropping from his hands a lyre. Phaon, staring for an instant, turns away his face toward Sappho, and points to the earth behind him.*]

PHAON

What is there ?

SAPPHO

*[Kneeling, raises the lyre and looks upon the boy.]*

The lyre I played. Ah, little Hermes, thou!  
Lift up thy head, my luck-boy. 'Tis thy friend, dear,  
The goddess.

PHAON

*[Turning superstitiously.]*

Ha!

SAPPHO

The blood! His heart's still.

*[Rising fiercely toward Phaon.]*

You

Have murdered him — my elf, my intercessor!  
Blindly you struck this blow in your own darkness  
And killed him — innocent. Look! I accuse you!  
His blood is on you.

PHAON

*[Who has looked, speechless, upon the body, sinks upon his knees beside it.]*

Bion, my son!

SAPPHO

*[Shrinking back.]*

His father!

*[There is an utter silence. Sappho, gazing at the two, murmurs to herself in awe.]*

And if the dove had died, the child had lived.

*[With impulsive tenderness, she moves to speak to Phaon, but over his bowed form, her utterance fails. At last she half whispers to him.]*

Phaon, I did not know. — Phaon!

PHAON

*[Oblivious, touches the child's tumbled hair.]*

Shalt grow  
No taller now among the iris-reeds.

SAPPHO

Mine is this deed, not yours. My sorrow shall  
Be ransom for you.

PHAON

*[Rises slowly.]*

What hast *thou* for me?  
Thou which hast taken him! — *O moi!* Thalassa!  
*[He rushes into the temple.]*

SAPPHO

*[Wildly, following him.]*

No, no — not her! Not now to her!  
*[From off the scene, left, is heard a low crooning sound — the  
voice of Thalassa.]*

THALASSA

Eleu!

*[Sappho, at the temple door, pauses, clutching the tapestry.]*  
Where art thou, my Bion? Dim  
The way is; I hear thy shell  
No more; strike it louder.

[*Thalassa enters, bearing in her arms the babe.*]

Didst  
Thou meet with thy Babbo? We  
Have followed thy music far,  
Yet nowhere we found him in  
The night. Speak: where art thou? — Ah,  
Thou'st wearied, and laid thee down  
Asleep.

SAPPHO

[*Stepping forward, with compassion, intercepts Thalassa's gaze from the body.*]

Come no nearer. Go  
In peace.

THALASSA

The bright lady!

[*Starting toward Sappho, she holds out to her the swaddled babe.*]

Feel,  
'Tis cold now: will drink no more  
Its mother's milk.

[*Taking from her bosom the dolphin-bracelet.*]

Look, 'tis here —  
Thine arm-ring, the shining curse  
Thou gavest to Phaon; take  
The gold thing! Ah, take it back  
That so may my little one  
Be warm now, and drink again.

SAPPHO

[*Trembling.*]

'Tis cold ?

THALASSA

[*Fiercely.*]

Nay, shalt touch it not !

'Tis mine, mine ! Take thou the gold  
And give me its smile again.

SAPPHO

[*Slowly taking the bracelet from Thalassa, peers at the  
infant's face and draws away.*]

Ah me !

THALASSA

[*Looking from Sappho to the child with an eager hope.*]Thou hast ta'en it back  
At last ! Still why keepest thou  
The warmth of it ? Mine it is —  
Not thine — the babe. Give it me  
In my arm alive !

SAPPHO

[*Anguished, turns upon Thalassa.*]

What am I

To thee ? Or what art thou  
Or this to me ? — Not I,  
Not I it was who chilled its little heart.  
I say it was not I.

[*Thalassa, heedless and unhearing, watches only the child's face, while from her own the light of hope goes slowly out.*]

Phaon I took from thee,  
Phaon I freed, because his soul is mine  
And mine his own; and these —  
These little lifeless ones — I would have given  
Joy of their days; but now  
This double bolt from heaven, this aimless death  
Hath snatched them, as the lightning slayeth the  
    sheep.—  
O say not it was I!

THALASSA

It stirs not; it nestles not.  
Perchance yet the sacrifice  
Shall make it to breathe again.

[*Moving toward the temple.*]

Its father will know. —

SAPPHO

[*Placing herself in her path.*]

Not there!  
Go to thy kin on the beaches,  
Bearing thy sorrow. Go quickly  
Lest it shall be too late.

THALASSA

[*Smiling wanly, murmurs to the infant.*]

Nestling!

## SAPPHO

Hear me ! I plead to you. Passionate  
Slave imperturbable ! Sibyl —  
Sphynx of maternity ! Hear me  
Now ; I am humble.

## THALASSA

Eleu !

Nine moons was I blithe of it,  
Awaiting the cry of it ;  
Ah, glad was the glimpse of it  
And soft were the fingers ; warm  
It clung to me.

## SAPPHO

[*Terribly.*]

Leave me : I fear you.

You, of all beings, alone I  
Fear. On the waters I feared you.  
Even as he rowed us to freedom,  
Out of the drip of his oars, you  
Sang to him. Out of the fog-bank,  
Fog-born, the fate of you rose, and  
Drew us to shore again. But though,  
Sibyl, I feared you, yet now I  
Challenge. Not so shall that vision  
Blast, which I witnessed with Phaon  
Here — No, not so shall the coil of  
Circumstance strangle us ! I, not  
You, am his destiny. — Prove us !

[*Reënter Phaon from the temple.*]



THALASSA

[*Going to him.*]

Look, Babbo : 'tis gone away,  
Hath left my arms.

PHAON

[*Looking on the infant.*]

Both !

[*Gazing away to the sea.*]

The night  
Is lifting now.

THALASSA

Phaon, hast  
Thou sacrificed ?

PHAON

[*Pointing where Bion lies.*]

There : 'tis done.

THALASSA

[*Turning swiftly to the body, stoops near.*]

Poseidon ! Poseidon ! Ah !

[*Crouching over the body, she moans low and lays the infant  
beside it.*]

Io ! io ! Sleep with him.

[*She bows prostrate over the children.*]

PHAON

*[With sullen fierceness, slave-like, approaches Sappho.]*

Goddess, be merciful — thou that hast maddened me !

Thou that in longing

Infinite yearnest for life, be appeased now. For

*thee* — for thee this

Sacrifice ! Look, we have made our offering. There

is our life-blood :

Warm is it still, and the opened hearts have yielded

their happy

Spirits to thee. Be appeased !

SAPPHO

Phaon, do you not know me ?

PHAON

Long have I known thee — too long. First in my  
boyhood I saw thee.Thou from the awful immortals camest in storm, and  
thy beautyBlinded the day ; and the slave-folk warned me, but  
I would not heed theirCounsel. I loved thee. Ah, why — why now again  
in thy vengeanceHast thou returned here to curse me ? Thou, not  
Poseidon, hast spread these

Meshes of cloud to entangle me in this murder.

SAPPHO

*[Cries aloud.]*

No, Phaon !

PHAON

Kneel, Thalassa, bow down! Bow down to the  
Lady of Heaven;  
Pray thou with me.

[*To Sappho.*]

O remove thy scourge from us,  
most wretched slaves.

THALASSA

[*Bowing down with Phaon before Sappho.*]

Bright

Lady, give us our bairns again!

SAPPHO

Kneel not! No Lady of Heaven —  
Sappho am I, and a mortal wretched as ye are: a  
woman  
Born from the pang of a mother like thee, Thalassa  
— a woman  
Passionate, seeking the love of the man that loveth  
her. Phaon,  
Phaon! Remember you not this place in the sun-  
set, — the brightening  
Moon on the Ægean, the falling cliff-path below us,  
the crying  
Sea-birds — my hand on thy shoulder? I am Sappho  
— that Sappho!

PHAON

[*Dreamily.*]

Glorious there was your face as you leaned to me.

SAPPHO

Hast thou forgotten  
How, with our hands on my spear between us, we  
wrestled for mastery  
Here? — How you pleaded and, lordly, bade me  
relinquish, and conquered?

PHAON

Over your golden breastplate glooming, your hair like  
the tempest  
Darkened.

SAPPHO

[*Moving gradually nearer the cliff, while Phaon follows —  
hesitant, fascinated.*]

You lifted it high — the spear — and gazed  
on it, raising  
Upward your glowing mind to it, crying aloud 'gainst  
the heaven  
War on the tyrant gods that make men's slavery.

PHAON

Starlight  
Shone in your smile.

SAPPHO

How you towered, god-  
like yourself, — yea, as even  
Now! — and the spear in your hand grew divine — a  
fiery symbol.

PHAON

Yours was that fire.

SAPPHO

Then you hurled it into the  
mystery — hurled it  
Singing — and turned to me.

[*Exulting, as Phaon — ardent — reaches toward her.*]

So!

PHAON

Belovèd!

SAPPHO

Thou art restored to me!

[*Springing to the cliff-path.*]

Come, then : Our vision has triumphed.

THALASSA

[*Calling low.*]

Babbo!

PHAON

[*Pausing wildly, with instant revolution lapses to his slave's posture.*]

Ha ! thou art tempting  
Me to thy power again.

[*Going to Thalassa, who still is bowed, stricken, over the bodies.*]

Thalassa, come to me!

## THALASSA

*[Lifts her craving face to his.]*

Give them

Back to me, Babbo.

## PHAON

*[Starting.]*

Babbo! — Hark, they are calling it: “Babbo!”  
“Father!” From yonder they call to me, lifting  
their little arms hither  
Out of the dark of Hades. — Cease now, my Bion! I  
hear thee,  
Yea, and will bring ye both home again.

*[Raising Thalassa to him.]*

Mother of them, thou my slave-mate,  
Come with me! I — thou and I — shall draw them  
again to us — call their  
Flitting ghosts back into flesh and blood — warm  
again in our arms. Come,  
Come to the beach with me: far, far in the salty-  
weed caverns,  
There will I give thee them back, and make repara-  
tion; there shalt thou  
Bear to me children — alive, bright-eyed avengers of  
me, their  
Father, — this murder. Thalassa, lift up yon little  
body,  
And I will bear in my son unto the temple.

[*Lifting the dead boy in his arms, he goes with the slave-woman, who carries the infant child. At the door of the temple, where their eyes meet across the dead forms of their children, Phaon gives to her a yearning look of tenderness, and they enter the temple.*

*From her place by the cliff whence she has watched without moving, Sappho calls with anguished appeal.]*

SAPPHO

Thalassa !

[*The colours of sunrise begin now to flood the scene. Away on the left are heard the voices of men and maidens singing.*]

THE VOICES

Gath'ers, what have ye forgot,

*Hymenæon !*

Blushing ripe on the end of the bough ?

*Hymenæon !*

Ripe now, but ye may not reach —

For the bride is won, and the groom is strong :

*Kala, O Charíessa !*

SAPPHO

[*Murmurs.*]

The epithalamium ! — and so the end !

[*Slowly, with aspect of succumbed despair, Sappho moves toward the steps of Aphrodite's shrine. As she does so, the Priest of Poseidon comes from the temple to the first pillar and, raising there his trident toward the sunrise, stands awaiting the approaching singers, whose flutes and lyres sound nearer.*

Art thou then come once more, O Silent One?

[*Sinking at his feet.*]

God of the generations, pain, and death,  
I bow to thee. — Not for love's sake is love's  
Fierce happiness, but for the after-race.  
Yet, thou eternal Watcher of the tides,  
Knowing their passions, tell me! Why must we  
Rapturous beings of the spray and storm  
That, chanting, beat our hearts against thy shores  
Of aspiration — ebb? ebb and return  
Into the songless deep? Are we no more  
Than foam upon thy garment? — flying spume  
Caught on thy trident's horn, to flash the sun  
An instant — and expire? Are we no more?  
Reveal to me! Break once thine infinite  
Vow of secretiveness, and whisper it  
Soft. I will keep thy secret.

[*Rising.*]

Thou *wilt* not!  
Thou wilt divulge it — never. Fare you well!

[*She rushes up the steps to the jutting shrine.*]

Another wave has broken at your feet  
And, moaning, wanes into oblivion.  
But not its radiance! That flashes back  
Into the Morning, and shall flame again  
Over a myriad waves. That flame am I,  
Nor thou, Poseidon, shalt extinguish me.  
My spirit is thy changeling, and returns  
To her, who glows beyond the stars of birth —  
To her, who is herself time's passion-star.



[Turning to the edge of the rock, Sappho calls upward into the breaking mists, through which the full glory of morning ruddies her white robe with its splendour.]

Beautiful Sister, goddess of desire,  
Come to me ! Clasp me in your wings of sunrise  
Burning, for see ! I go forth to you burning  
Still. — Aphrodite !

[She leaps into the fog and disappears.

As she vanishes, there enters, through the colonnade, singing, the bridal procession of youths and girl-disciples, accompanying Atthis, who holds, smiling, the hand of a youth in gold armour. As these reach and pass the silent form of the Priest, the fog — increasing from the sea — rolls over the scene.]

#### VOICES OF THE SINGERS

Like the stars about the moon

*Hymenæon !*

When her orbèd smile she shows,

*Hymenæon !*

Lovers, yield to her your light ;

She is single in the night.

*Kala, O Charïessa !*

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## A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Mr. Percy MacKaye is of interesting descent on both sides. His paternal greatgrandfather came to this country from the Scottish Highlands about 1800. His grandfather, Colonel James Morrison MacKaye, a staunch adherent of anti-slavery doctrines, was an intimate friend of Clay, Webster, Garrison, Lincoln, and other leaders of the time. During the Civil War, he was one of three commissioners appointed by Lincoln to personally investigate the condition of the negro in the South; and his official report thereon was an important influence among those which determined the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

His father, James Steele MacKaye was a man of various talent and versatility. Beginning as a painter, a pupil of Hunt, Inness and Gerôme, but losing his studio and paintings in Paris during the Franco-Prussian War, he became an ardent disciple of François Delsarte, and introduced his principles to America. Thus indirectly he was led to make a profession of the drama: as author of many successful plays, the best remembered probably being "Hazel Kirke" and "Paul Kauvar;" as actor in his own plays and in "Hamlet" and other plays of Shakespeare; and as theater founder and manager at the old Lyceum and at the Madison Square in New York. His activity carried him also into various other pursuits, in which he was inventor, artist, and man of affairs.

On his mother's side, Percy MacKaye is of New England Puritan descent, his ancestors having come to Massachusetts in 1632. His maternal grandmother was President of one of the earliest women's colleges in New England. His mother, *née* Mary Medbery, was born in Newburyport, Mass. Her intellectual activity, which must have exerted a strong influence on her son, has recently been shown by a charming dramatization of Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," lately published.

Percy MacKaye was born in New York City, March 16th, 1875. The winters of his boyhood were spent in or about New York and—as he grew old enough—in the



frequent companionship of his father in the theater, especially during the production of "Paul Kauvar" at the old Standard Theater. He was also initiated in the knowledge of "behind the scenes" by his older brother, William Payson MacKaye, an actor and an artist of great promise, who died near the beginning of his career. His summers—and a few winters—were passed in rural New England, chiefly at Shirley, Mass., which he has always considered as home. In 1892-93, he made his first essay in the genre of poetic drama, by writing a series of choral songs for his father's vast musical drama "Columbus," to have been performed in his Spectatorium, planned, and nearly completed, for the World's Fair. Anton Seidl, who had been engaged to conduct the music, said of this enterprise: "In the art of poetic spectacle, this project as far exceeds Baireuth, as Baireuth exceeded the drama of Wagner's predecessors." Owing to an unforeseen panic in Wall Street, however, the Spectatorium was never completed, and soon after—as a result of incessant overwork—Steele MacKaye died (Feb. 25th, 1894) at the age of 52.

At Harvard College his son Percy studied the usual four years, taking his A. B. in 1897. During his Junior year, he wrote a poetical play, acted by Harvard and Wellesley students, entitled "Sappho," dealing with the Greek poetess as heroine, but bearing no other resemblance to his latest work. At graduation he was one of the speakers, his commencement part being entitled: "The Need of Imagination in the Drama of Today." A year after graduation, he was married to Miss Marion Homer Morse, of Cambridge, Mass., and went abroad, spending two years in Italy, Switzerland, Germany and England. In Italy he and his wife lived in a villa on the Aldobrandini estate at Frascati, near Rome, where he wrote a poetical play entitled, "A Garland to Sylvia." Going to Leipzig, he matriculated at the University, where he studied Germanics, and wrote a play on the subject of the Anglo-Saxon Beowulf. A later result of this study was his play "Fennir the Wolf," published in 1905.

Returning in 1900 to New York, he taught there in a private school for boys for four years. During this period, Mr. E. H. Sothern became interested in his dramatic work, and commissioned him to write "The Canterbury Pilgrims," as yet unacted, but published in 1903. In 1904, he joined the colony of artists and writers at Cornish, N.H., where he has his permanent home. There he has devoted himself entirely to literary and dramatic work.

His third published poetic drama was "Jeanne d'Arc," 1906; and his fourth "Sappho and Phaon," 1907. He has also written a prose version of part of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," and a prose drama, "The Scarecrow," based on Nathaniel's Hawthorne's sketch "Feathertop." Besides these he has written a considerable amount of verse and prose, including a lecture on "American Drama: Some Aspects and Potentialities," delivered in Chicago, 1906; "Ninety-Seven," a poem read at the decennial reunion of his Harvard Class (published in the New York *Post* June 29, 1907), and the Prologue to the Outdoor Masque given at the remarkable celebration, in 1905, of the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Cornish colony by Augustus Saint-Gaudens.

The first of his plays to be acted on the public stage was "Jeanne d'Arc," produced by Mr. E. H. Sothern and Miss Julia Marlowe at the Lyric Theater, Philadelphia, October 15, 1906 (with a musical *suite* by Prof. F. S. Converse of Harvard), and since then performed by them at Chicago, New York, Boston, London, and elsewhere. Its success from every point of view has been great, and bodes well for the future not only of Mr. MacKaye as a dramatist, but of the whole American drama as well.

"Sappho and Phaon" was produced, by Mr. Harrison Grey Fiske, October 21st, 1907, at the Lyric Theater, New York, with Madame Bertha Kalich in the title rôle.

## SAPPHO AND PHAON

**A Tragedy. Set forth with a Prologue, Induction, Prelude, Interludes and Epilogue**

*Decorated cloth, gilt top, 240 pages, \$1.25 net  
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This Tragedy, laid in 600 B.C., and dealing with the fate of the Lesbian poetess, is framed in an imaginative, archeological, setting of Prologue, Induction, Interludes and Epilogue. As first staged in New York, however, by Mr. Harrison Grey Fiske, with Madame Bertha Kalich in the rôle of Sappho, the Tragedy itself has, with the author's full approval, been alone prepared for production.

Though departing from certain ancient traditions, yet—as a discriminating critic has written of it—"The drama is Greek in tone; the tragedy is treated reverently; the characters are pawns in the hands of the resistless gods; struggle as they will, they are enmeshed by fate . . . and quite the most notable triumph of the play is not the lyric passion of Sappho, with its echoes of the authentic fragments of her Lesbian poesy, not her splendid pæan to the mastery and the mystery of the sea; not the depiction of the splendid poetess and aristocrat, all suddenly turned woman, pleading for her love; not the dainty foppishness of Alcæus, the Greek poet, in love with Sappho; nor the graver attitude of Pittacus, tyrant of Mitylene, likewise her lover—but the wonderful changes in the character of this base, callous slave, this Phaon, whose physical manhood first marked him out from among his fellows." . . . "Enter now the symbolic and the human elements. Phaon, as slave, cannot wed. But by

Thalassa, slave-woman, his mate, he has two children, one of whom is ill. The father intends to sacrifice a dove to Poseidon, to appease the god's anger, so the babe may recover. Sappho persuades him to give her the dove, for the service of Aphrodite. The human element enters with Thalassa, symbolical of the spirit of maternity, of devotion to helpless bairns, singer of the crooning cradle-songs of the world. Henceforth Phaon is torn between the passionate dream of this resplendent poetess, who seems to him as one of the gods, and the saner love of the mother of his children, of her who shared uncomplainingly with him his dull, dank sea-cave."

In this elemental conflict, Poseidon, the angered "god of the generations, pain and death," defeats Aphrodite; and Phaon, stricken once more a slave, bows over the body of his little dead son, while Sappho, uttering an ultimate defiance of destiny, leaps from the temple-cliff into the sea.

## JEANNE D'ARC

*Decorated cloth, gilt top, 16 pages, illustrated, 12mo,  
\$1.25 net; by mail \$1.35*

First produced in Philadelphia, October 15, 1906, by E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe, and since, by the same actors, in New York, Boston, London and other large cities. Everywhere it has been praised. *The Nation* pronounced it "a drama which is likely to find a place in the permanent literature of the American theatre."

Mr. John Corbin wrote of it in *The Sun* (New York): "What Lamartine did for Jeanne d'Arc in biography, and Boutet de Monvel in illustration, Mr. MacKaye has done in the drama. Here for the first time on the stage we have the maid of voices and visions in her habit as she lived, nobly patriotic in her homely peasant girlhood, sweetly intimate, unaffectedly simple in her triumph and in her martyrdom. . . . Mr. MacKaye has then, quite obviously, taken an honorable place in the front rank of modern poetic dramatists."

"The great thing that this young American has done," declares *Collier's Weekly*, "is to make the shepherd girl of Domremy mean something more beautifully real than, on the stage at least, she has been before—make us see the girl that D'Alençon saw, and at the same time hear the voices and feel the mystery and power that Jeanne heard and felt."

"It is not too much to say that his treatment of the Maid of Orleans is at once the most convincing and sympathetic yet accorded her by poet or dramatist," is the confident assertion of the Philadelphia *Inquirer*.

"Every line is strong and purposeful, and though not lacking in the higher tones all are couched in common language," is the opinion of the *Dramatic Mirror*. "The author seems to have discovered a mean between prose drama and so-called dramatic poems."

## FENRIS THE WOLF

### A Tragedy

*Cloth, gilt top, 150 pages, 12mo, \$1.25 net  
by mail \$1.32*

"In Mr. Percy MacKaye's tragedy, 'Fenris the Wolf,'" says *The Nation*, "we have a play which is an uncommonly bold piece of imagination. In setting and atmosphere the play is highly poetic. The action passes before rune-stones in the northern forest at day-break or twilight, in prison chambers, and by deep forest pools. Though it closely skirts the borders of the fantastic, it never becomes quite fantastic. Mr. MacKaye has made excellent poetic use of his knowledge of Scandinavian poetry. In the recurrent wail of Fenris, for example, how faithful is the reproduction of the cadence and color of the alliterative stave :

"Free me, Freyja ! Frore am I, frost-bit ;  
Go we together into greenwood glad !  
Mirk under moon-mist mad, will meet thee,  
Hunt thee from hiding, thy heart-beats hear.

"Fenris is the only character who speaks in Scandinavian metre. The others all use blank verse of a nervous, sometimes a little too nervous, quality. It is, nevertheless, a poetic venture of a sincerity and magnitude for which there can be nothing but admiration."

"In 'Fenris the Wolf' Percy MacKaye has written a drama that shows triple greatness. There is the supreme beauty of poetry, the perfect sense of dramatic proportion, and nobility of purpose. It is a work to dream over, to make one see glorious pictures, a work to uplift to soul heights."—*Los Angeles Examiner*.

## THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS

### A Comedy

*Decorated cloth, gilt top, 210 pages, 18mo, \$1.25 net  
by mail \$1.35*

The principal characters are Geoffrey Chaucer Alisoun, the wife of Bath; Madame Eglantine, the prioress, and Johanna, Marchioness of Kent. The time of the action is in April, 1387, and the scenes are the Tabard Inn, Southwark, another tavern on the road, and the exterior of Canterbury Cathedral. The story, which is entertaining from first to last, has to do with Chaucer's adventure with the wife of Bath and his love for the prioress.

"Every line of *The Canterbury Pilgrims* seems to have been wrought with infinite pains. The play possesses splendid literary qualities—and it is actable."

—*Dramatic Mirror*.

"For a twentieth century author to take the characters of Chaucer's famous stories and give them parts in a new comedy in verse, is a bold, nay, a perilous undertaking. But Mr. Percy MacKaye has carried it through with a large measure of success. He has drunk deep of the great Father of English poetry's well, so that the comedy's delightfully quaint language has the real Chaucerian ring. With much skill he portrays the pilgrims, picturing their respective failings and virtues so deftly that they appeal as strongly to modern taste as they did to our ancestors, yet preserving generally the mediæval tone. . . . Specially amusing is Friar Hubert, a jovial, mischievous rogue, whose drollery is irresistible."—*Oxford Chronicle*.

"Throughout the play the characters of these two most innocent lovers [Chaucer and the prioress] are maintained with exquisite humor and feeling for life. Outside of the covers of Shakespeare it would be hard to find anything of the kind at once more original and more nearly on Shakespeare's level."—*New York Times*.

## CRITICAL OPINIONS

### *A Few Early Comments upon "Sappho and Phaon."*

*New York Nation* : "Mr. MacKaye's work is the most notable addition that has been made for many years to American dramatic literature. It is a true poetic tragedy, classic in form and spirit, not always glowing with the fire of genius, but nevertheless charged with nappy inspuation; dignified, eloquent, passionate, imaginative and thoroughly human in its emotions. It is a great advance in almost every respect upon his 'Jeanne d'Arc,' and, whether considered in the light of literature or drama, need not fear comparison with anything that has been written by Stephen Phillips or John Davidson."

*Boston Daily Advertiser* : "The fire and vigor and beautiful imagery of Mr. MacKaye's happy experiment in classic form are evident. . . . If, being suitably staged and acted, it fails to find favor with the theater-going public, we shall be surprised. . . . This play is high-water mark in American dramatic verse."

*Boston Evening Transcript* : "In fact we remember no drama by any modern writer that at once seems so readable and so actable, and no play that is so excellent in stage technique, so clear in characterization, and so completely filled with the atmosphere of romance and poetry."

*New York Evening Mail* : "Elevated throughout in its thought, pure in its symbolism, absorbing in its action, 'Sappho and Phaon' may be welcomed at once to a high place in our literature."

*Philadelphia Evening Telegraph* : "It is sincerely to be hoped that 'Sappho and Phaon' may happen to strike the popular fancy, for it will be an elevating and refined addition to theatrical literature."

*New York Times* : "Nor has any dramatist bound us in a spell like that which Percy MacKaye has woven into his poetic drama entitled 'Sappho and Phaon.'"

















